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IT'S TIME FOR APPLE WATCH

BRINGING DEEP CHANGES TO APPLE'S SALES OPERATION

'FOCUS' MOVIE NUMBER ONE

ENJOYS MIXED CRITICAL & COMMERCIAL RECEPTION

WIRELESS SHOW

ALL EYES ON APPLE & BLACKBERRY

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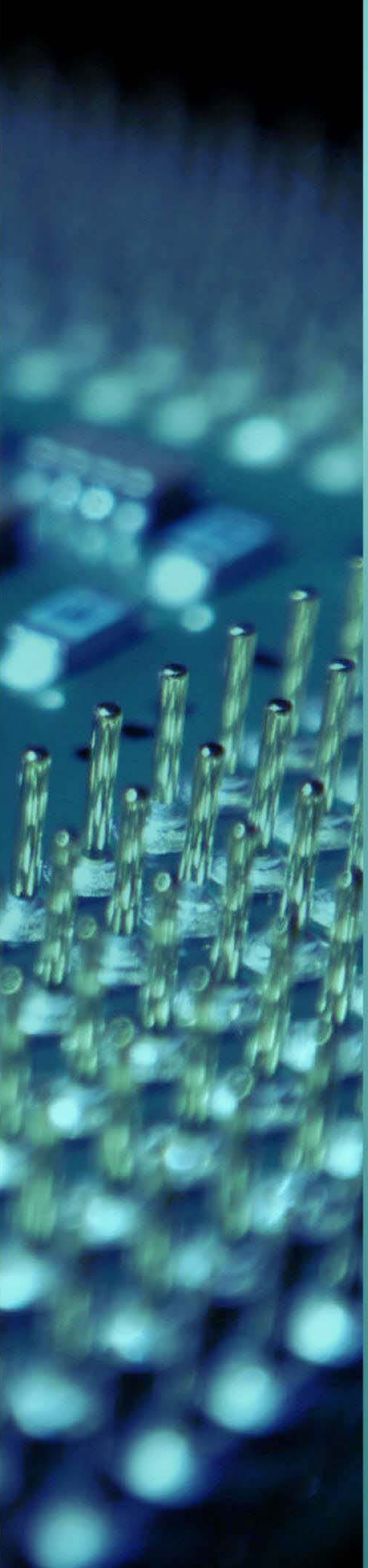
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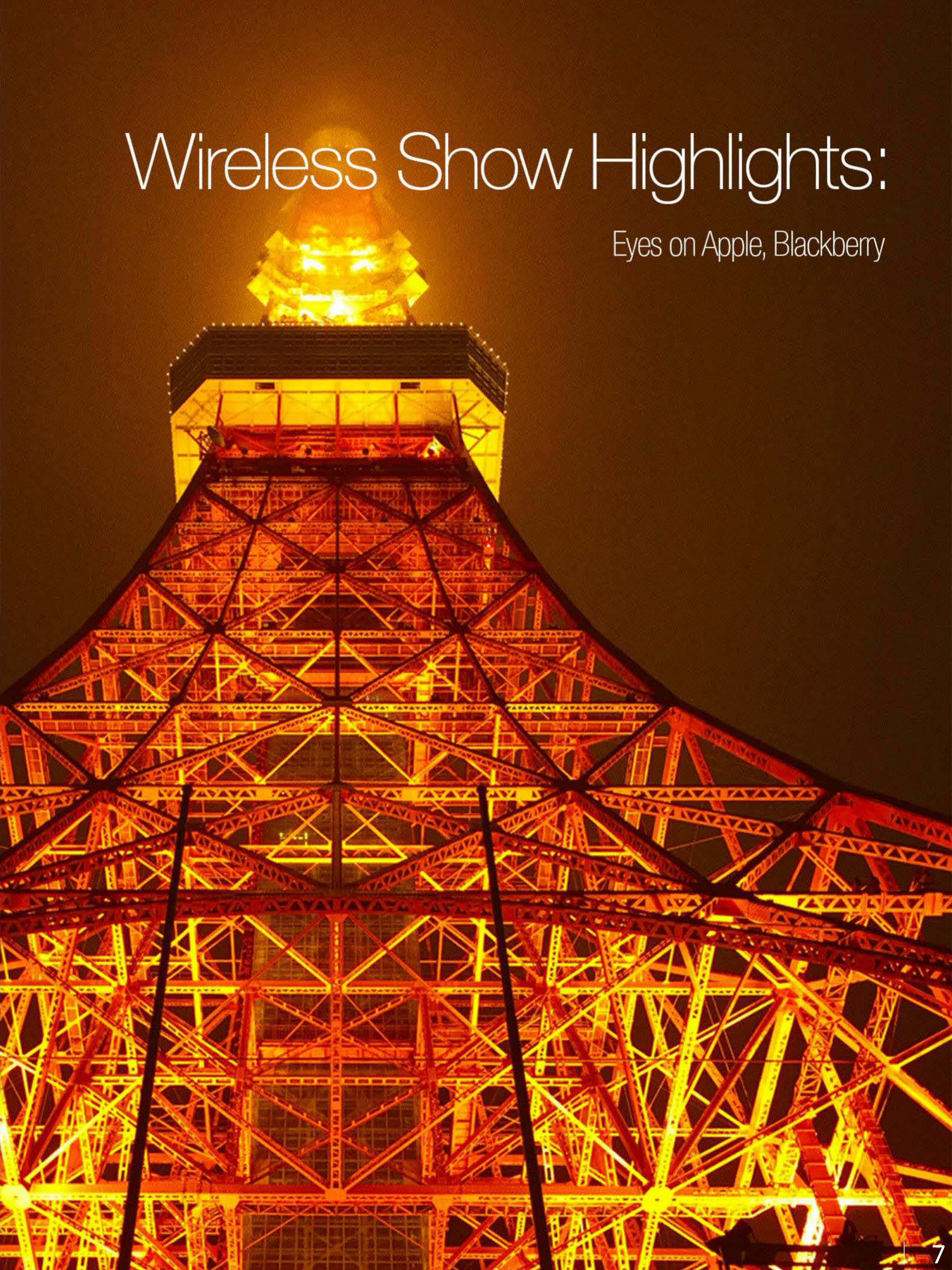
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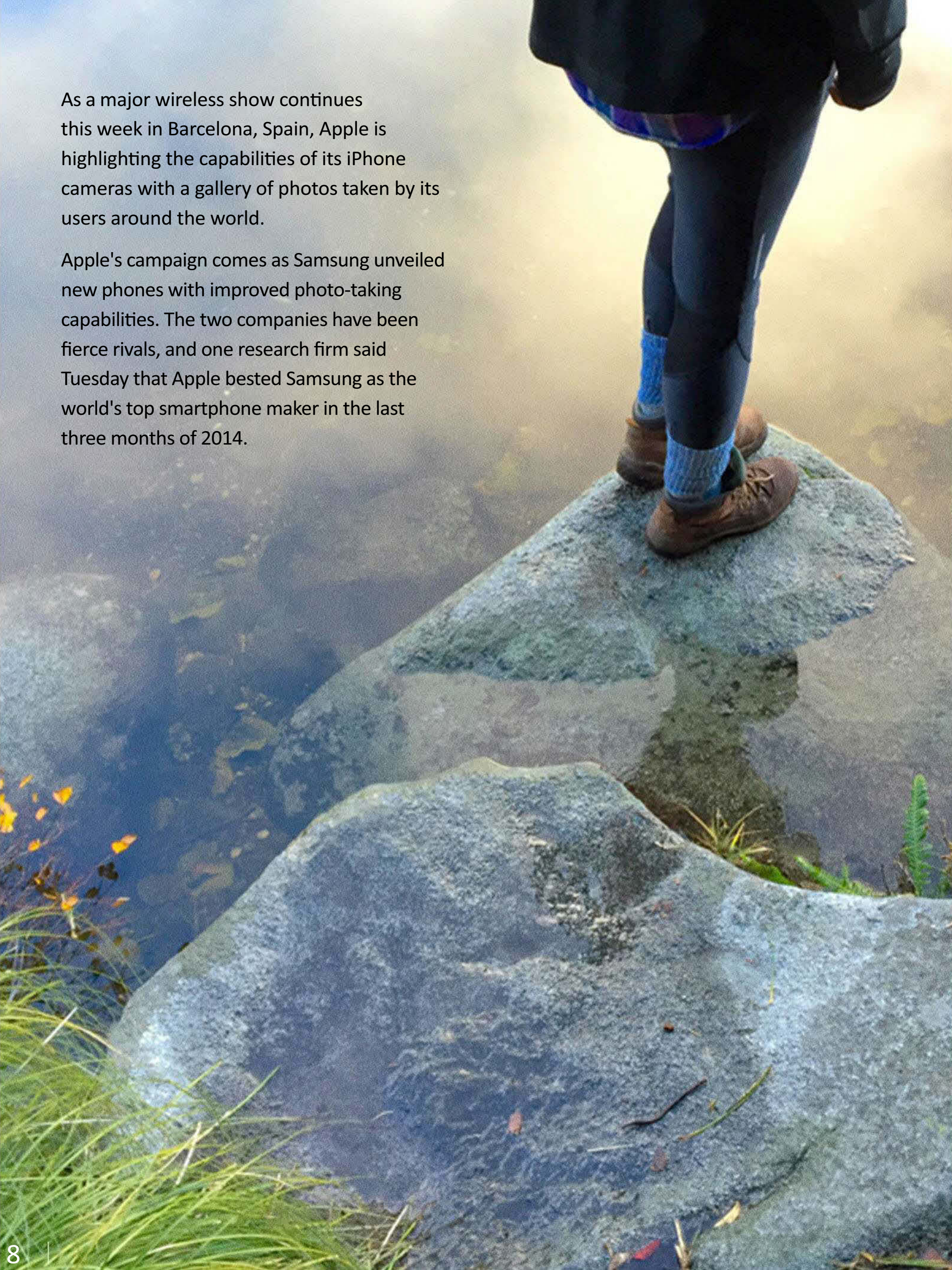
Wireless Show Highlights:

Eyes on Apple, Blackberry



As a major wireless show continues this week in Barcelona, Spain, Apple is highlighting the capabilities of its iPhone cameras with a gallery of photos taken by its users around the world.

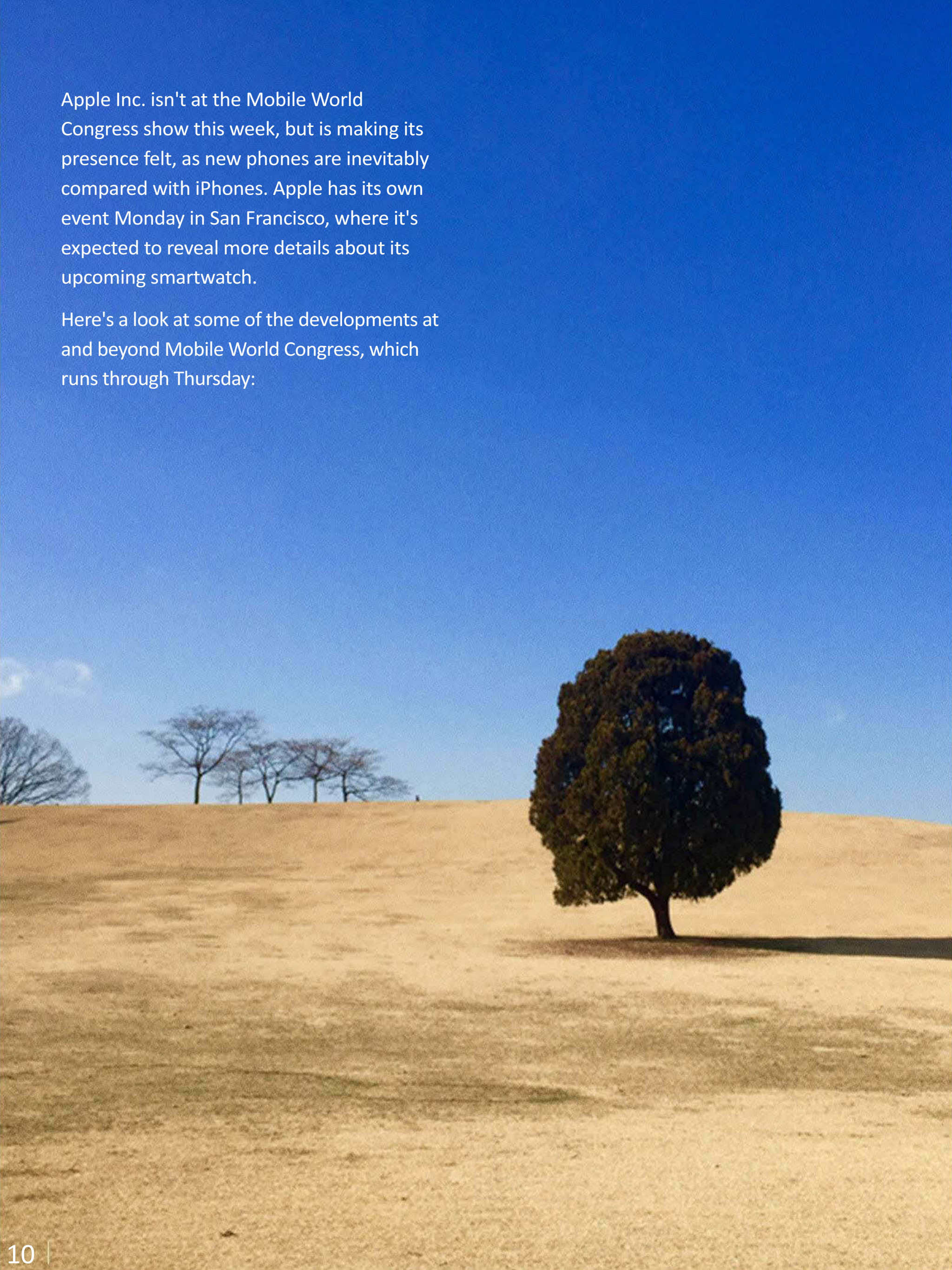
Apple's campaign comes as Samsung unveiled new phones with improved photo-taking capabilities. The two companies have been fierce rivals, and one research firm said Tuesday that Apple bested Samsung as the world's top smartphone maker in the last three months of 2014.





Apple Inc. isn't at the Mobile World Congress show this week, but is making its presence felt, as new phones are inevitably compared with iPhones. Apple has its own event Monday in San Francisco, where it's expected to reveal more details about its upcoming smartwatch.

Here's a look at some of the developments at and beyond Mobile World Congress, which runs through Thursday:





APPLE'S REMOTE PRESENCE:

Apple is turning over a large portion of its home page, along with billboard and print ads in dozens of cities, to photos from its "Shot on iPhone 6" campaign. The company collected photos from 77 users around the world by combing through Flickr, Instagram and other sites (and getting permissions from the photographers). Apple is featuring 57 photos and three videos from those users at **http://apple.com/worldgallery** . The rest are on print ads.




FIRE LANE
NO
PARKING!





Apple is seeking to show that people can take quality images with iPhones, without needing to buy and carry a stand-alone camera. The photo captions describe what makes each image stand out and present tips and information on any apps and accessories used.

The campaign launched Sunday just as Samsung Electronics Co. announced its new Galaxy S6 phones, which promise improved focus, low-light capabilities and color adjustments to account for ambient light.



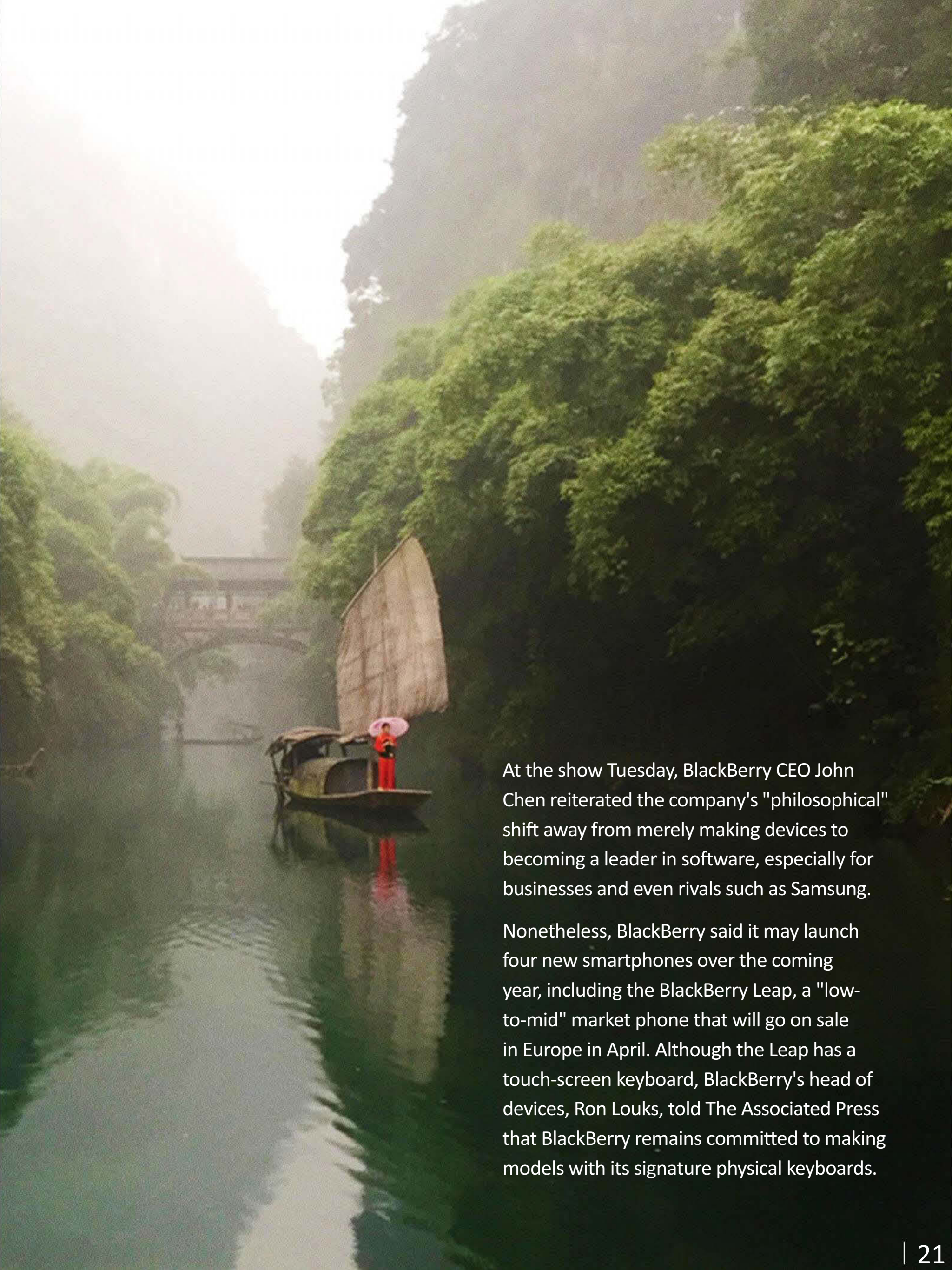
THE ORIGINAL:

Before iPhones came around, there was the BlackBerry. But iPhones - and later, Android phones - showed people that smartphones can do much more than email and calls. BlackBerry was late in modernizing its operating system to offer those capabilities.









At the show Tuesday, BlackBerry CEO John Chen reiterated the company's "philosophical" shift away from merely making devices to becoming a leader in software, especially for businesses and even rivals such as Samsung.

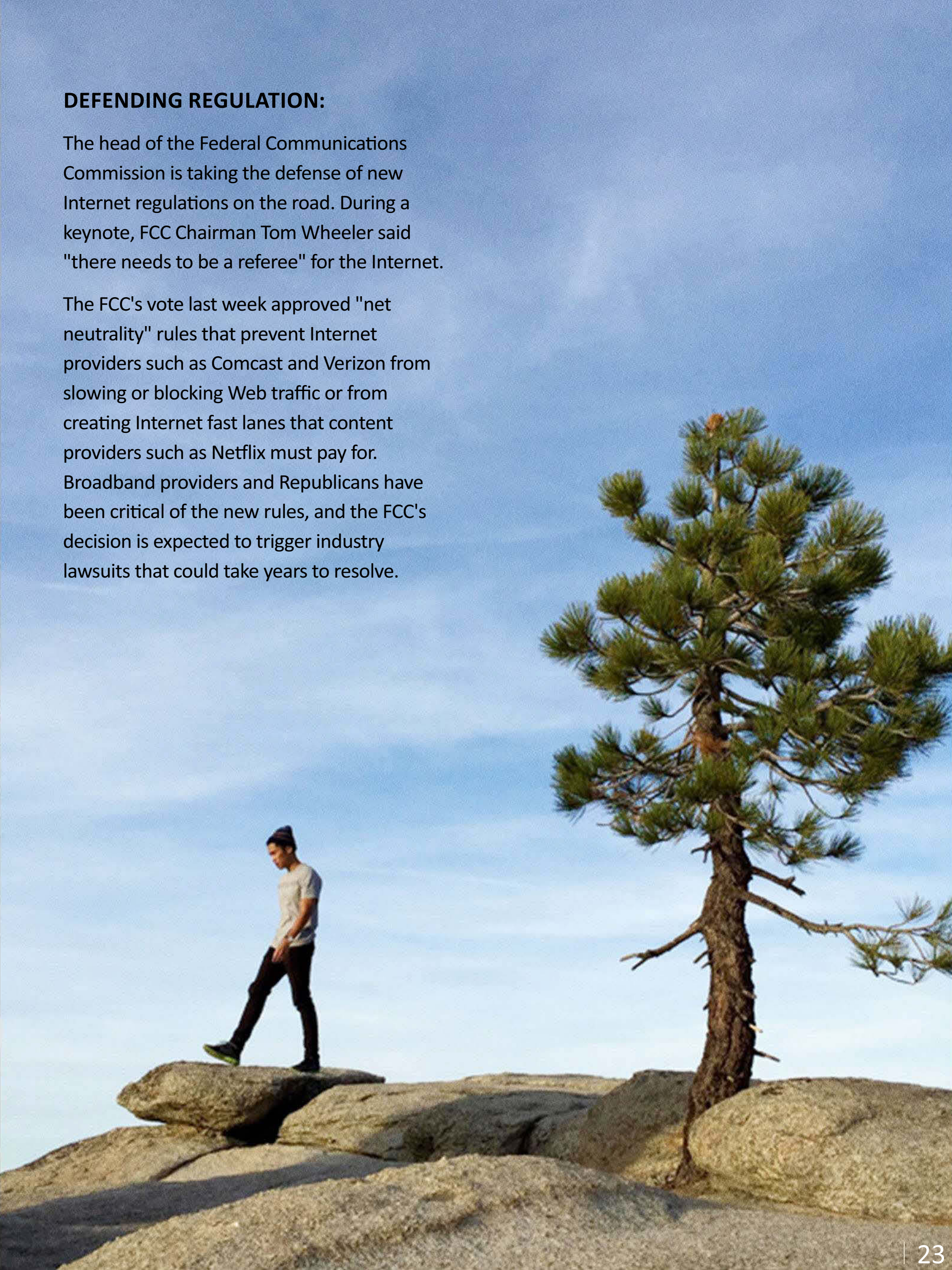
Nonetheless, BlackBerry said it may launch four new smartphones over the coming year, including the BlackBerry Leap, a "low-to-mid" market phone that will go on sale in Europe in April. Although the Leap has a touch-screen keyboard, BlackBerry's head of devices, Ron Louks, told The Associated Press that BlackBerry remains committed to making models with its signature physical keyboards.



DEFENDING REGULATION:

The head of the Federal Communications Commission is taking the defense of new Internet regulations on the road. During a keynote, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler said "there needs to be a referee" for the Internet.

The FCC's vote last week approved "net neutrality" rules that prevent Internet providers such as Comcast and Verizon from slowing or blocking Web traffic or from creating Internet fast lanes that content providers such as Netflix must pay for. Broadband providers and Republicans have been critical of the new rules, and the FCC's decision is expected to trigger industry lawsuits that could take years to resolve.





Wheeler did not specifically address the political aspect of the decision, but said "the people against it spawned all kinds of imaginary horribles. This is no more regulating the Internet than the First Amendment regulates free speech in our country."





VERONICA ROTH WORKING ON NEW SERIES; 1ST BOOK DUE IN 2017

Veronica Roth fans can start the countdown.

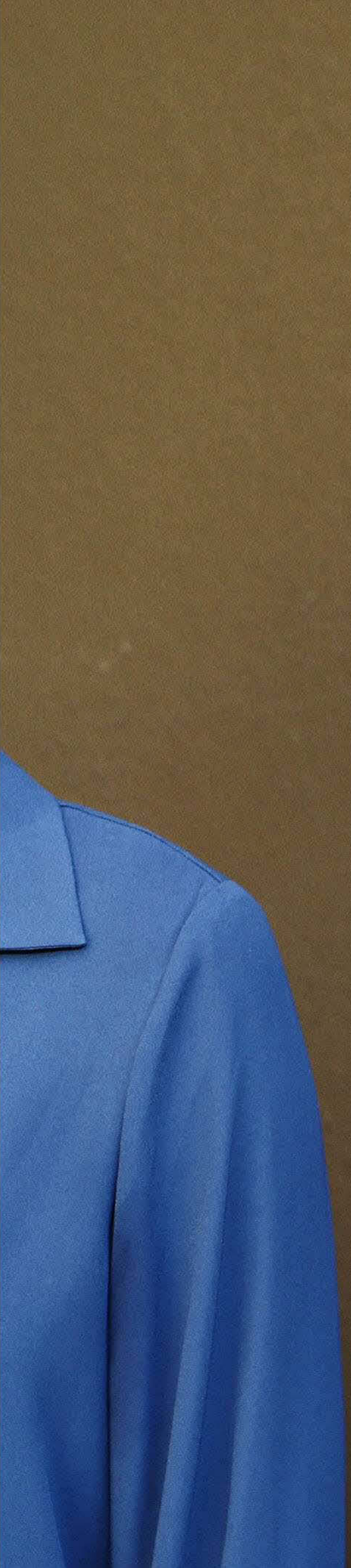
The “Divergent” author is set to write a new two-book series, HarperCollins Children’s Books told The Associated Press on Monday. The books currently are untitled, with the first one expected in 2017 and the next in 2018.

Roth and her publisher offered few specifics, beyond saying the series is in “the vein of `Star Wars’” and will tell of a boy’s “unlikely alliance” with an enemy.

“Both desperate to escape their oppressive lives, they help each other attain what they most desire: for one, redemption, and the other, revenge,” the publisher announced.

In a recent email to the AP, Roth wrote that “The idea started with a character. All the other elements - setting, world, even a substantial portion of the plot - came after.” She added that while she had a “pretty detailed” outline for the new series, she was still in the early stages of writing.





"That's why I'm being so vague," she explained.

"Divergent," a Dystopian trilogy Roth completed in 2013, has sold more than 30 million copies and along with Suzanne Collins' "The Hunger Games" and John Green's books helped perpetuate the strong growth of young adult novels. The first "Divergent" movie, starring Shailene Woodley as teen heroine Tris Prior, came out a year ago and quickly earned more than $100 million at the box office. Three more movies are planned, starting with the March 20 release of "Insurgent."

A Chicago resident, the 26-year-old Roth was still in college when she began "Divergent," writing it in her jammies while on winter break from Northwestern University. She is now one of the world's most popular authors.

"I think I'd have to be a robot not to occasionally worry about expectations!" she wrote to the AP. "But mostly I try to trust my instincts. It helps that I'm really in love with this project - that makes it a joy to work on.

"I've been really taking my time with it," she said of the new series. "I've written huge sections a certain way only to cut them and start again. I've stepped away for a while, to work on other things, and then come back when I have better perspective. I've been more patient with myself and with the story. I've expanded my collection of comfortable pants and snack foods. It's all working quite well so far."


42MM
WATCH • 42MM CASE • 316L S



APPLE WATCH BRINGING DEEP CHANGES TO APPLE SALES OPERATION



NEW WEARABLE MIGHT EVEN REPLACE YOUR CAR KEYS


COMPOSITE BACK - SERIAL C02WK



VAULTS APPARENTLY BEING BUILT IN APPLE STORES

The ever-popular Apple CEO, Tim Cook, has been turning yet more heads recently - as well as pricking a fair few ears. That's partly because he has been touring Europe, paying a visit to Apple's Covent Garden retail store in London, as well as heading to Germany to visit Chancellor Angela Merkel. But in the process, **he has also been revealing more about one of the most eagerly awaited wearables of all time: the Apple Watch**.

We're still a month away from the Watch hitting the shelves - that'll be in April, following a March 9 launch event - but in the meantime, Apple has been working hard to not only finalize production, but also prepare its sales operation for the onslaught of products and demand. Cook has also been giving us some indications of just what the Watch will be able to do - and they don't necessarily neatly correspond with previous reports.





A 'WATERPROOF' WATCH THAT MIGHT EVEN REPLACE YOUR CAR KEYS

One declaration that Cook apparently made about his own Watch - yes, that's right, he's already wearing one - was that his constant use of it extended to even wearing it in the shower, at least according to the translated version of iGen.fr. This contradicts the company's suggestion in its early September unveiling that the timepiece would not be suited to such a watery environment, but if true, it indicates that it will be delivered with previously unknown water-resistant features.

In an interview with the British Telegraph newspaper on his visit to the Covent Garden store, Cook also revealed that the device was "designed to be able to replace car keys" - **the idea being that instead of the "clumsy, large fobs" presently in use**, those wishing to unlock the doors of their vehicle will be able to elegantly do so with their wearable.

Although not all of the features that were once planned for the Apple Watch - such as various sophisticated health-tracking capabilities - are reportedly set to make the version that lands in our hands in the coming few months, that doesn't prevent future versions incorporating them.

If a car unlocking feature does get added to a future Watch, it would fulfill a longstanding aim by the company to improve car keys, **a recently-reported Apple patent having focused on this technology** in relation to the iPhone. It would also help to make some

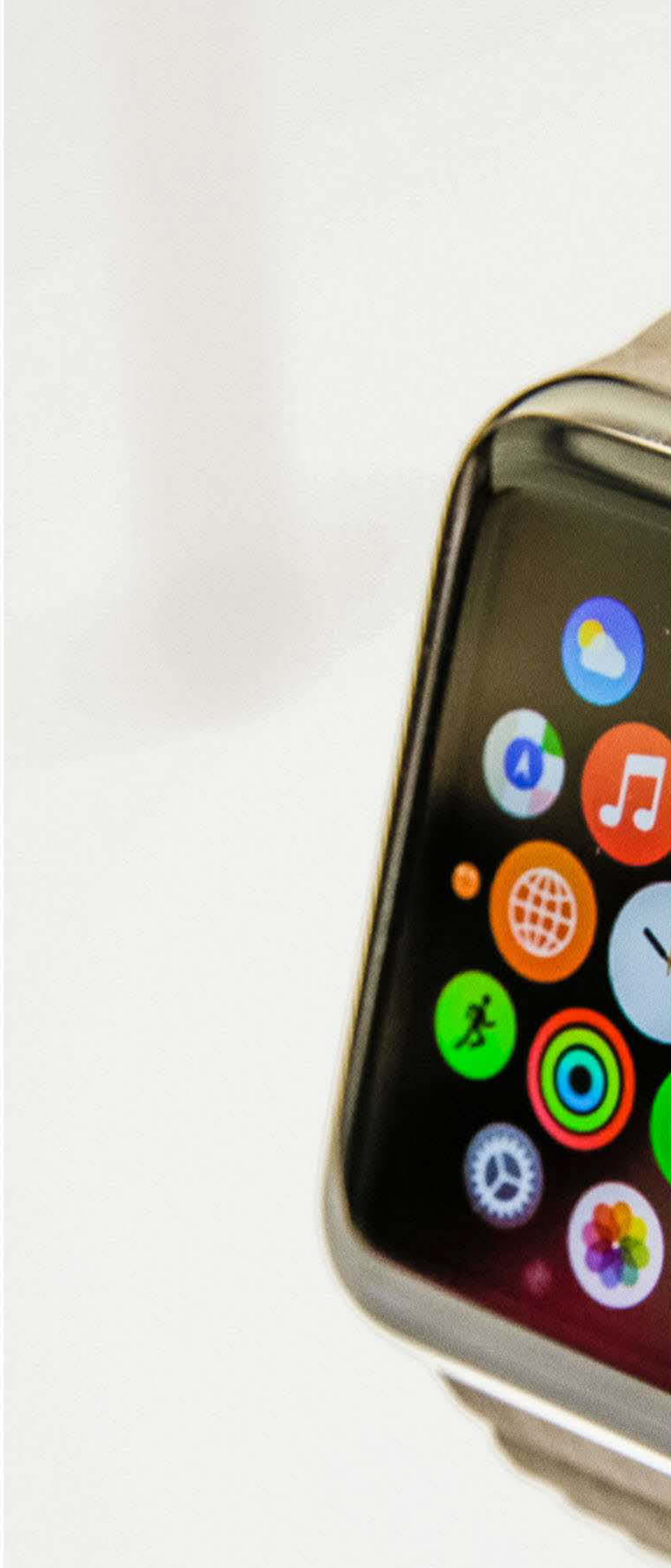
sense out of the recent rumors that Apple is developing its own car under the 'Project Titan' banner.

A STILL VERY IMPRESSIVE DEVICE

All of this shouldn't lead us to conclude that the first Apple Watch that shortly hits shelves won't be an amazing addition to the burgeoning wearables market. It's clear, for example, that there will still be some great health features, **from heart rate monitoring to the gentle tapping of the wearer's wrist if they haven't had sufficient exercise**, reminding them to stand up and go for a walk. Credits will even be rewarded to those who reach their metabolic targets.

The Watch will also be able to double up as an ultra-safe and secure credit card, thanks to the emergence of Apple Pay, with the Cupertino firm not being informed of either the goods that the wearer is purchasing or their price. Cook has also promised message filtering capabilities that will make reacting to urgent messages - such as a family emergency - a lot easier, while the battery will also last a whole day, another exciting new piece of information.

Indeed, in addition to fashioning the sleek lines of the Watch itself, Apple's British design genius Sir Jony Ive has also handled the special magnet technology of what Cook has described as an "incredible" charger - apparently created for both efficiency and beauty. Considering all of these perks, it shouldn't be a big shock that Cook would




Tue
9



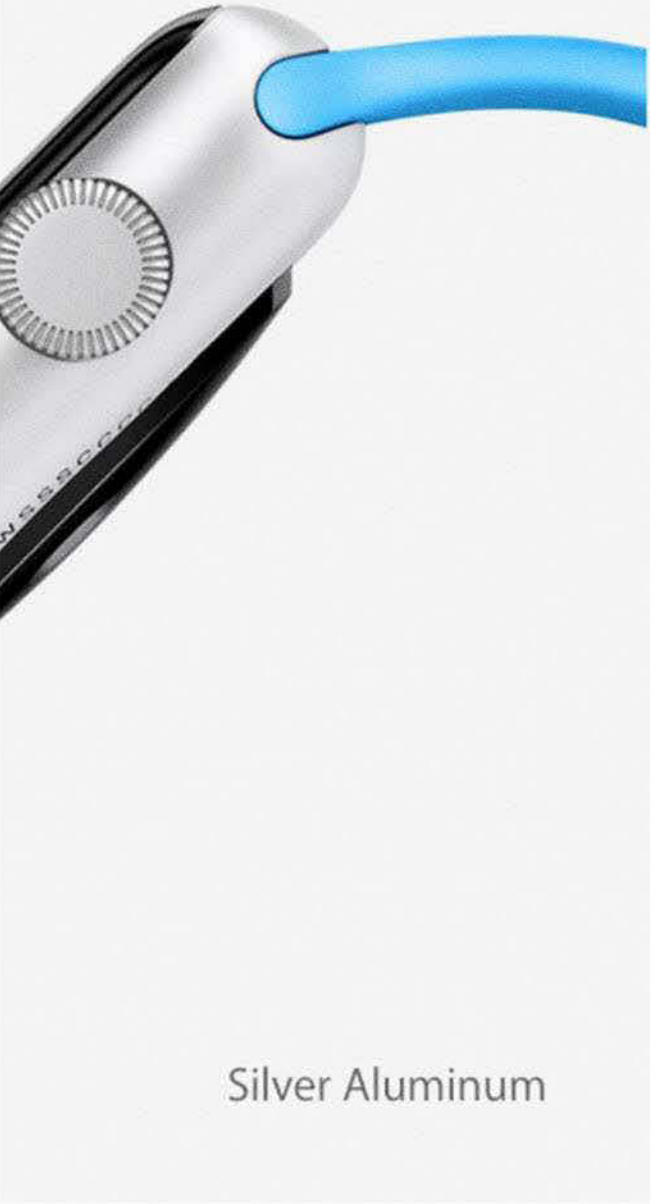
Stainless Steel





Space Black Stainless Steel





Silver Aluminum



18-Karat Yellow Gold



Space Gray Aluminum



18-Karat Rose Gold

now struggle to live without it - declaring that "I'm now so used to getting all my notifications and all my messages. It's so incredible just to do this.

"This will be just like the iPhone: people wanted it and bought for a particular reason, perhaps for browsing, but then found out that they loved it for all sorts of other reasons."





WATCH SET TO TAKE APPLE STORES BY STORM

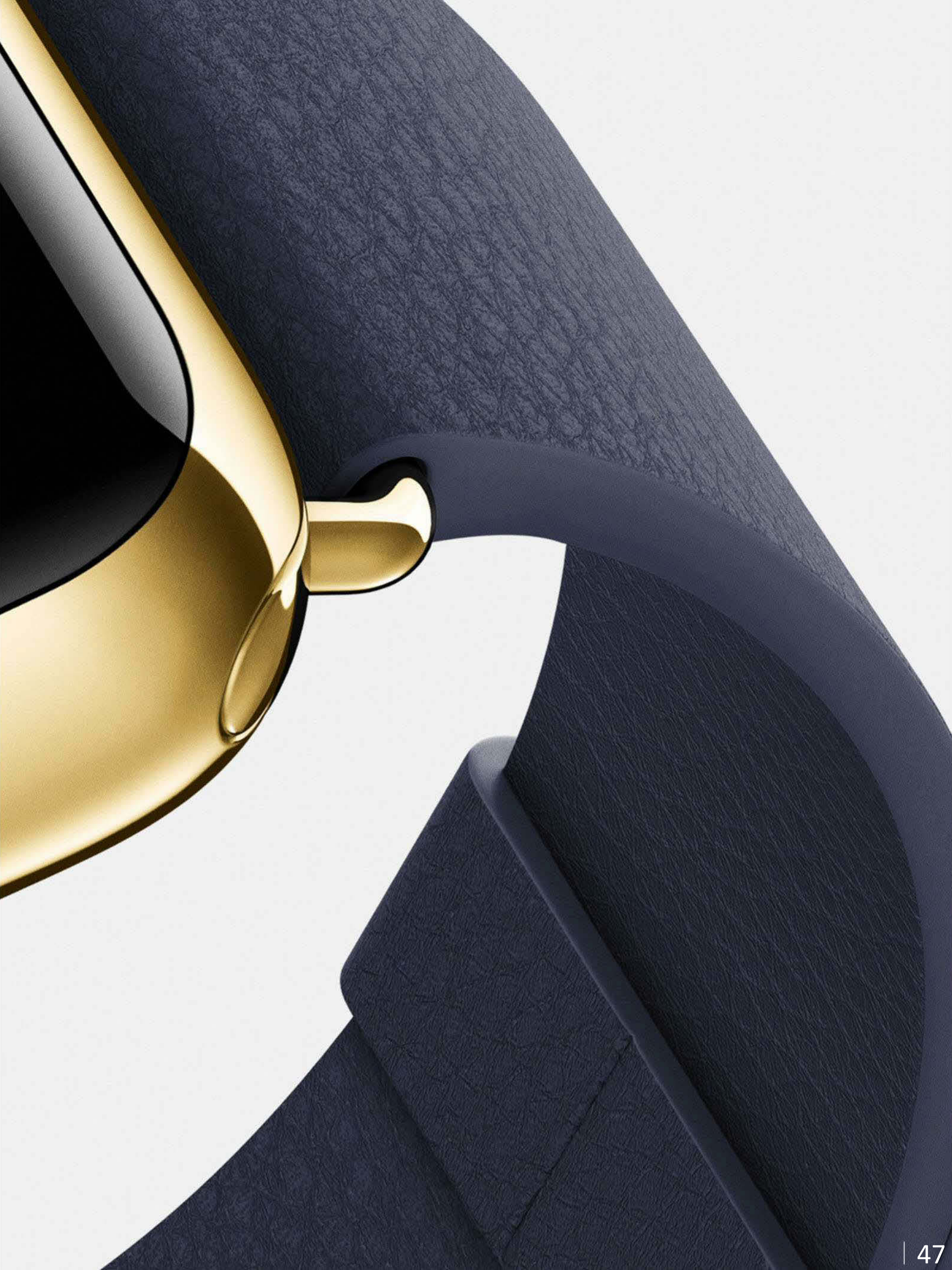
Cook wasn't journeying around Apple's European retail stores just to rouse morale - by all accounts, it remains so high that he barely needs to. He was also there to talk about the challenge that the Watch's release will undoubtedly cause to these retail stores, as they aim to keep giving customers the incredible and seamless in-store experience that they are used to from the Californian giant.


APPLE WATCH • 42MM CASE • 18-KARAT GOLD • SAPPHIRE CRYSTAL • CERAMIC BACK • SERIAL F67NGHJJY2C

As he told the Covent Garden staff, "We've never sold anything as a company that people could try on before" - something that may necessitate "tweaking the experience in the store". The buck there stops with the ex-Burberry boss and woman who now oversees Apple's stores, Angela Ahrendts, to whose work Cook has paid handsome tribute.

As a matter of fact, and possibly to help ensure that best possible experience, the Watch will only be available to buy at launch from Apple itself, and not from such non-Apple stores as BestBuy or Walmart, at least according to German distribution sources. **Such an exclusive deal mirrors that for the iPhone when it was first released**, a Cult of Mac report suggesting that "Apple most likely wants to keep the selling experience on its terms until people are more familiar with what an Apple Watch is."

That report also indicated apparent Apple plans to house the expensive gold versions of the Watch in dedicated vaults in Apple Stores, with customers able to view the pricier devices through glass cases. Backing up Cook's words, the report also stated that "customers will be able to ask specialists to try the different models on, while smaller tables are also supposedly planned so that the Apple Watch Sport and others are better staged."



POSSIBLY APPLE'S MOST EXPENSIVE PRODUCT EVER

Officially, we don't know what prices the various Apple Watch models will sell for until the big launch... but that hasn't stopped many people coming up with estimates. According to a Business Insider article, **Piper Jaffray analysts are tipping the wearable to effectively be much costlier than previously imagined**, on account of the bands, storage cases and other extras that buyers will also inevitably fork out for.

That could mean that the luxury version of the timepiece - the Edition - has an average selling price (ASP) of more than $7,500, a big jump on the £4,999 that was previously expected. Even a $10,000 ASP for the gold version of the Watch hasn't been ruled out by many informed commentators. Such numbers could also significantly boost Apple's profit from early Watch sales, amid predictions of $5 billion per quarter in revenue purely from the gold variant.

That said, no matter how adventurously Apple eventually prices the Watch, it is unlikely to come anywhere near the $75,000 that a diamond-studded version of the timepiece by luxury and couture product design company Brikk could cost you. Some 30 luxury models of the yet-to-be-released smartwatch have been announced by the company, which it is claimed "will afford unmatched opulence to an exclusive clientele worldwide."

If you decide to go for one of these Brikk Lux Watches, you'll have a choice of sizes of







38mm and 42mm, as well as of such colours as 24-karat yellow gold, 18-karat pink gold and 950 platinum. There will also, naturally, be various bands to choose from. All three of the line's editions - Standard, Deluxe and Omni - are prepared via the disassembly of Apple Watches and their subsequent repurposing with the aforementioned luxury materials in a "state-of-the-art laboratory".





Image: Jeff Carlson

WATCH COULD SPEARHEAD "EXPLODING" WEARABLES MARKET

All of the signs point to very exciting times ahead for all fans of wearables and all things Apple. The wider wearables market might even "explode" as a result of the Watch's introduction, to coin the term used by CNNMoney's Daniel Burrus. Burrus was among those back in 2010 to see the iPad as a device that would bring a computing revolution instead of flopping as had been anticipated by many of his peers. He has now expressed his belief that "**Apple's smartwatch will provide the necessary momentum to get people using wearables, in spite of all the naysayers**."

We would certainly be hard-pressed to disagree with him. Brace yourself for a 2015 that promises to be all about the Apple Watch, at least as much as 2007 was about the iPhone and 2010 was about the iPad. ■

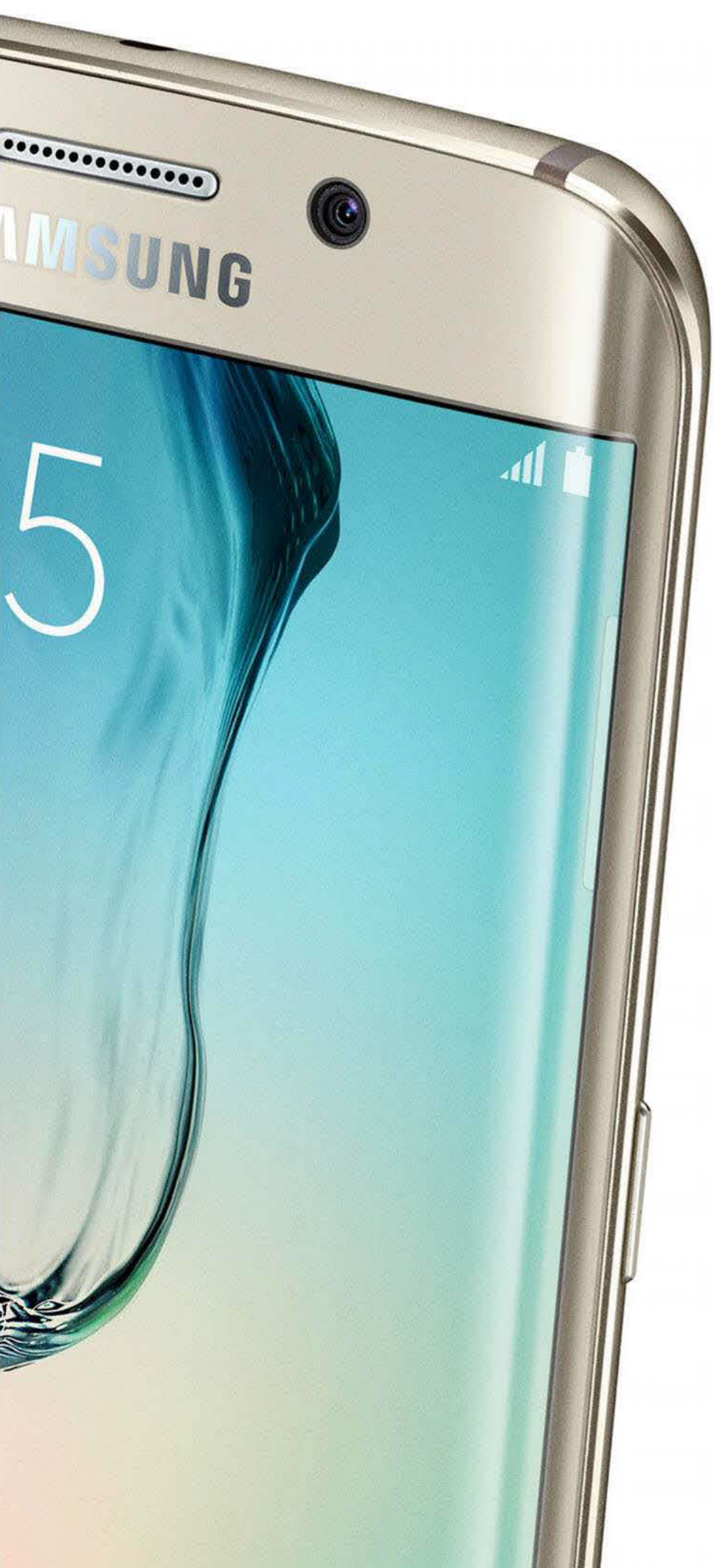
by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan






SAMSUNG
12:4
Sun, 1 March

FIRST LOOK: SAMSUNG GETS A LOT RIGHT WITH NEW S6 PHONES



Samsung's new Galaxy smartphones improve in two major areas: design and picture quality.

Samsung ramped up its camera technology in last fall's Galaxy Note 4, and the camera is even better in the Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge announced Sunday. More importantly, the new phones have a more stylish design.

I had less than 90 minutes to try out the new phones in controlled settings, so it's too early for a definitive assessment. But I'm impressed with what I've seen so far. The phones will start selling in April, at prices not yet determined.

DESIGN

For years, Samsung phones have had removable backs made of plastic. That allowed for battery replacement, but made the phones look cheap. I'm glad to see the metal frame and glass back in the new phones. The phones are lighter than before, even with metal.

The main S6 model feels boxy in my hands. More recent iPhones have smoother, curved edges. The S6 Edge curves on the left and right sides to create side displays, so it feels better. But boxy or not, I prefer Samsung's new design over its old models.

CAMERA

The Note 4 camera was excellent for producing images rich in color. However, the colors sometimes felt unnatural, especially with indoor shots. The S6 phones seek to fix that by using their infrared sensors (normally used for heart rate tracking) to better detect and adjust for specific lighting conditions. This sounds promising.

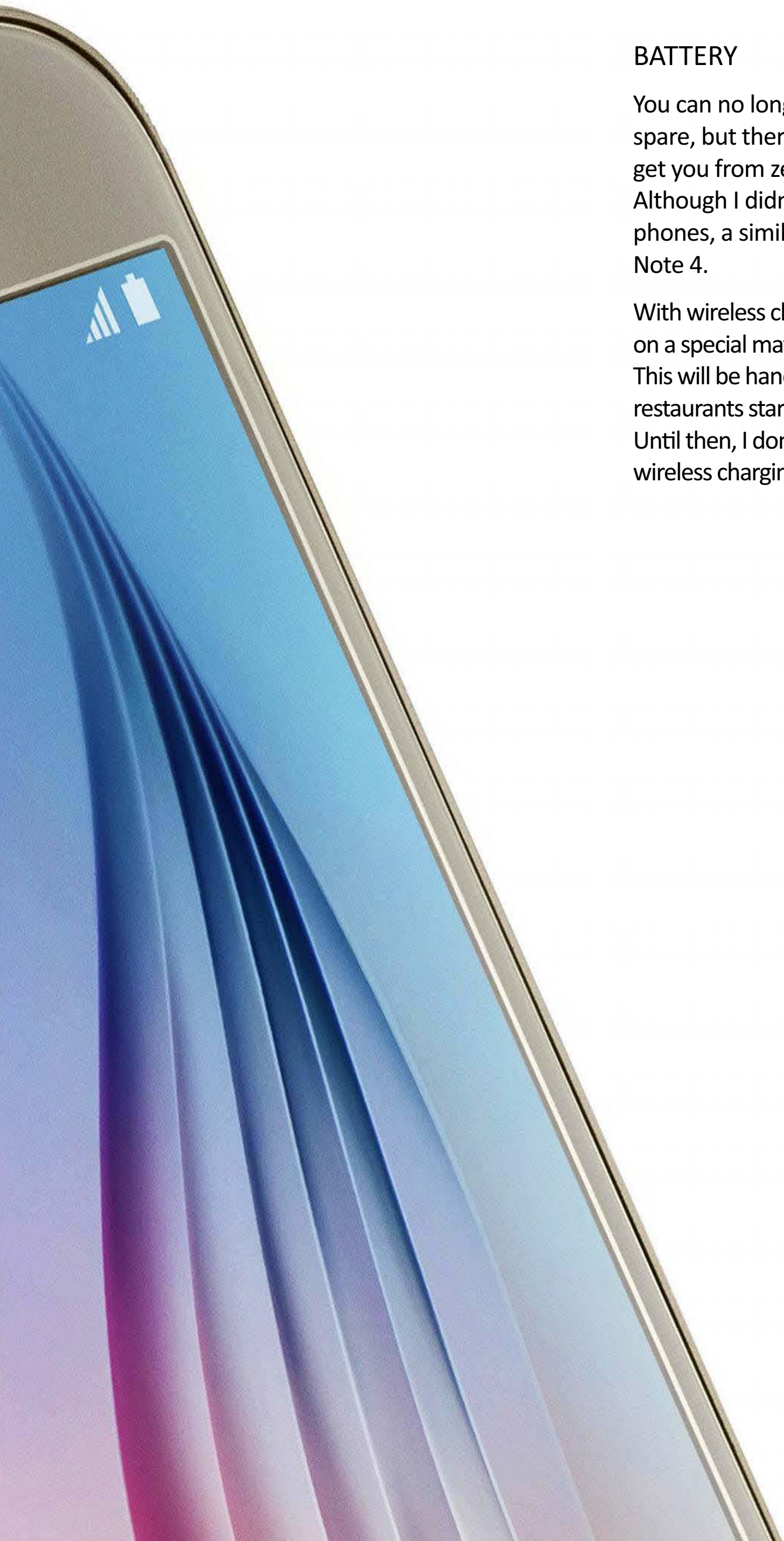
The S6 phones also sport better focus, borrowing technology from Samsung's stand-alone NX1 camera. You already can focus on a person by touching that part of the screen. But if the person walks away, the focus is off. With the new technology, the focal point moves with the person. It worked in my limited tests, though the subjects were still blurry because of poor lighting conditions. I may get better results outdoors.

One handy feature: Double tap the home button anytime to open the camera app quickly, so you don't miss shots.



MSUNG


SAMSUNG
12:45
Sun, 1 March



BATTERY

You can no longer replace the battery with a spare, but there's fast-charging technology to get you from zero to 50 percent in a half-hour. Although I didn't get to test this with the S6 phones, a similar feature worked well on the Note 4.

With wireless charging, you can place the phone on a special mat to charge it. No cords needed. This will be handy when coffee shops and restaurants start making these mats available. Until then, I don't mind the cord, especially as wireless charging is slower.



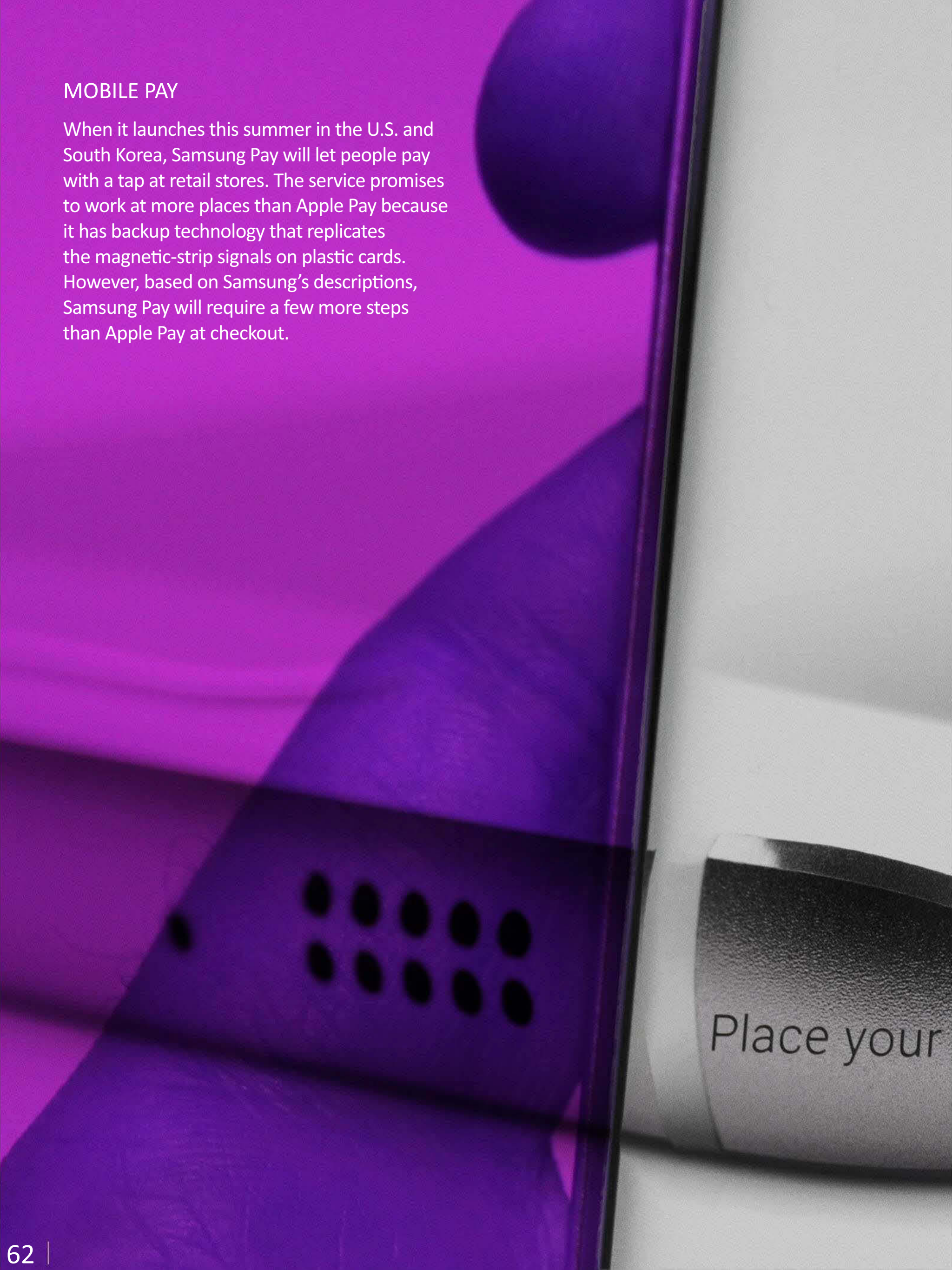
SIDE DISPLAYS

The S6 Edge model has curved sides, similar to last fall's Note Edge phone. The S6 Edge improves on the Note by having the display curve over both the left and right sides. The Note Edge's side display was on the right only, making some features awkward for lefties.

With the S6 Edge, you can assign colors to important contacts - such as red for your spouse. With the phone face down, the side will flash red when a call from your spouse comes in. You can decide without rudely lifting the phone whether you really need to take that call.

MOBILE PAY

When it launches this summer in the U.S. and South Korea, Samsung Pay will let people pay with a tap at retail stores. The service promises to work at more places than Apple Pay because it has backup technology that replicates the magnetic-strip signals on plastic cards. However, based on Samsung's descriptions, Samsung Pay will require a few more steps than Apple Pay at checkout.




28%
finger on the Home key then lift it
off again.


SAMSUNG
12:45
Sun, 1 March

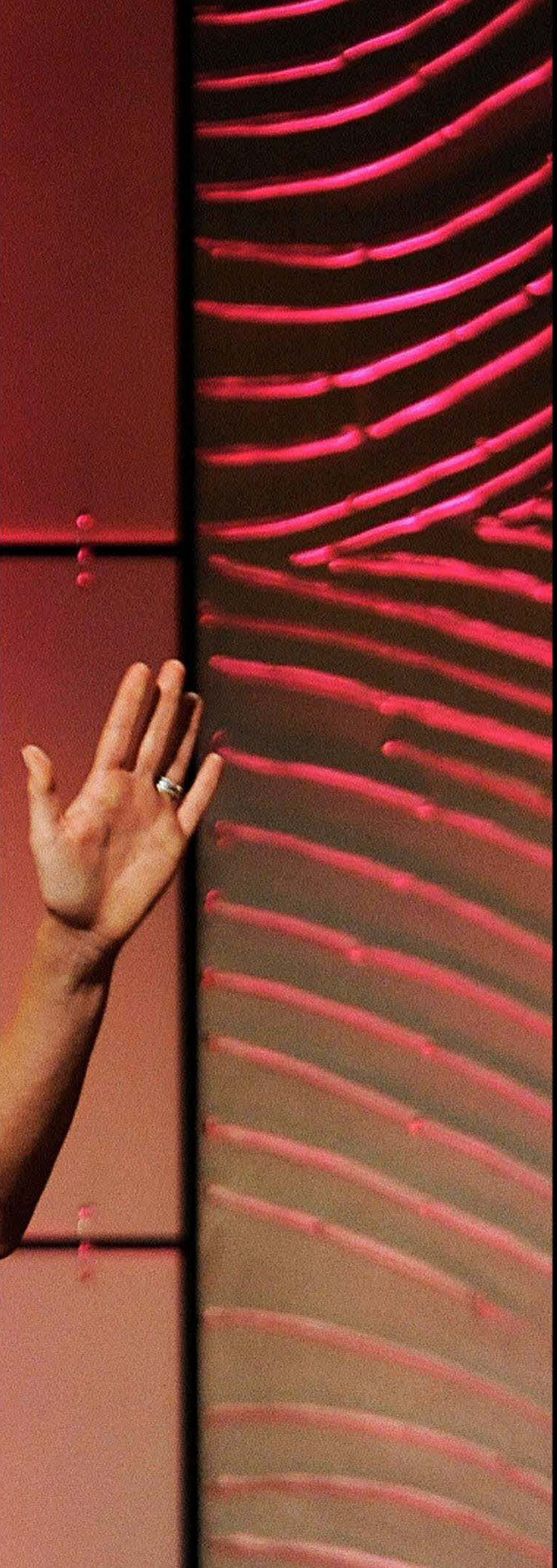
OTHER “TOUCHES”

The S6 phones have improved fingerprint sensors. Before, you had to swipe down on the home button; the phone wouldn’t unlock if you didn’t swipe correctly. Now, you simply touch the home button, just as you do on iPhones. The fingerprint ID will authorize mobile payments too.

Samsung also streamlined the software interface. Currently, the menu of additional options is accessed by tapping on the three vertical dots on the top right. Why three vertical dots? Who knows? That’s been replaced with the word “MORE.”

Little touches like these will help make the phones more accessible to customers.





POP CHANNEL BRINGING DAYTIME EMMYS CEREMONY BACK TO TV

The Daytime Emmys ceremony is returning to television with a new home on the Pop channel.

The National TV academy and Pop, formerly the TV Guide Network, made the announcement Monday. The ceremony will air live from a Warner Bros. studio soundstage.

After losing its longtime spot on the broadcast networks in 2012, the Daytime Emmys aired on cable news channel HLN for two years.

Last year, it settled for streaming the proceedings online - a change in fortune that reflected the dwindling daytime audience.

In a statement, Pop channel President Brad Schwartz said adding such live events is among the ways the rebranded channel will grow.

The 42nd annual Daytime Emmys, produced by Michael Levitt, will air live on Sunday, April 26. A host was not announced.

Online:

http://www.emmyonline.tv

WILL SMITH'S FOCUS

ENJOYS MIXED CRITICAL AND COMMERCIAL RECEPTION





FILM IS A KEY TEST OF SMITH'S STAR POWER

Is Will Smith still a grade-A Hollywood star after 2013's After Earth, the critical and commercial flop in which he starred alongside son Jaden? It's a question that many industry observers and fans are asking, and if we were going to get an answer to it any time soon, it was always going to be in how his latest effort - the romantic dark comedy Focus - was received. Unfortunately, the answer was inconclusive, with the film topping the box office on lower-than-expected takings.

Let's get the essential facts out of the way first. $19.1 million **was enough to make the Glenn Ficarra and John Requa directed effort top dog at the North American box office in its opening weekend**. Given his past all-conquering record with such epics as Independence Day and Men in Black, Smith has reason to be disappointed with one of the lowest openings of his impressive career.

But then again, that seemingly underwhelming figure was still enough to end Fifty Shades of Grey's two-weekend spell at the box office peak, and judging by the words of Warner insiders, there don't seem to be many worries about Focus's longer-term financial prospects.

MIXED RECENT COMMERCIAL FORTUNES FOR SMITH

The summer of 2013 wasn't a great one by Smith's usual towering standards, Sony's tentpole After Earth mustering a meager

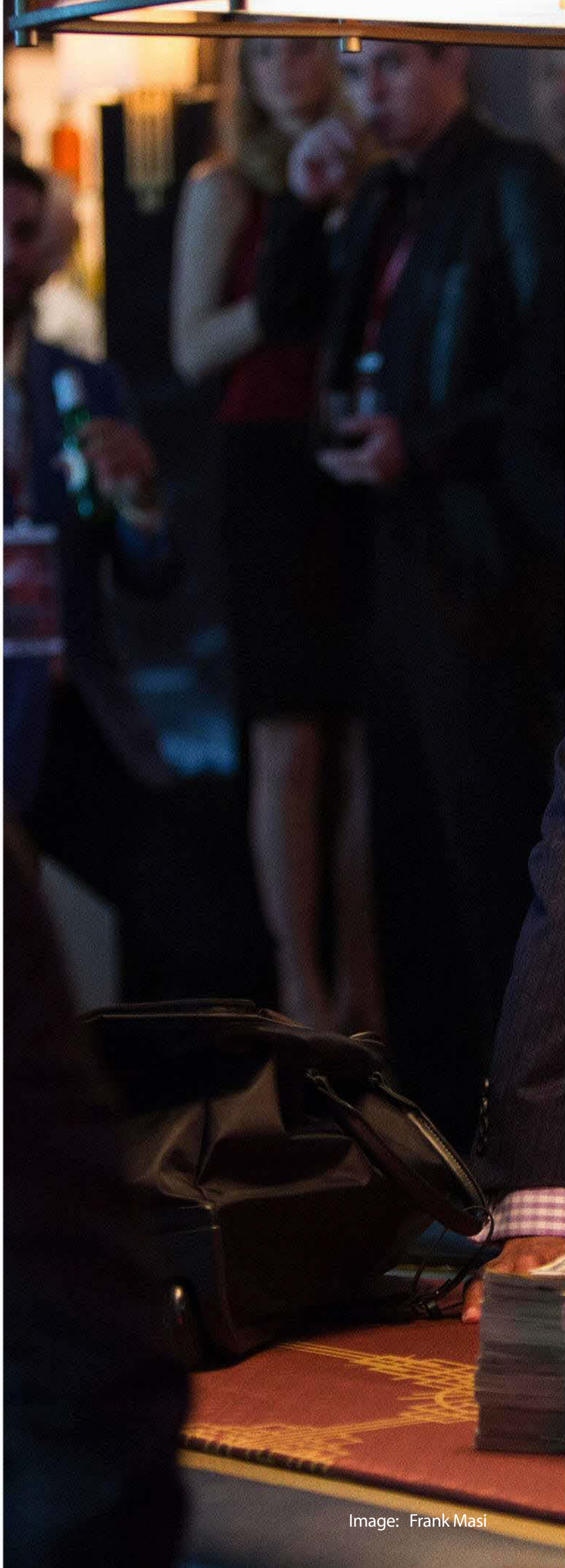


Image: Frank Masi



$27.5 million opening in North America, even if it did fare better elsewhere. It was also ravaged by the critics.

Focus is saved from at least some comparative scrutiny with that film by its much smaller size, reports suggesting that it was only $50 million in the making after rebates. However, an opening higher than $22 million was still the forecast among industry observers. Nor was Focus any more of a success in the overseas markets that have long proved so resilient for Smith. It opened to $12.2 million from 31 territories - about 30 per cent of the marketplace - to make an international total of $31.3 million.

The movie - a con-man caper also starring the up-and-coming actress Margot Robbie and 300 star Rodrigo Santoro - topped the Russian box office with $3.1 million, while $3 million in the United Kingdom wasn't sufficient to beat Fox Searchlight's The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, which opened to an amazing $5.9 million.

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM, HOWEVER

Not only did Warner head honchos mentioned in a report by The Hollywood Reporter express their confidence that Focus would go on to perform well financially, but they also emphasized that it was never the intention for its opening to be on a par with Smith's bigger movies. They also drew attention to bad weather across much of the country that may have adversely hit revenue.

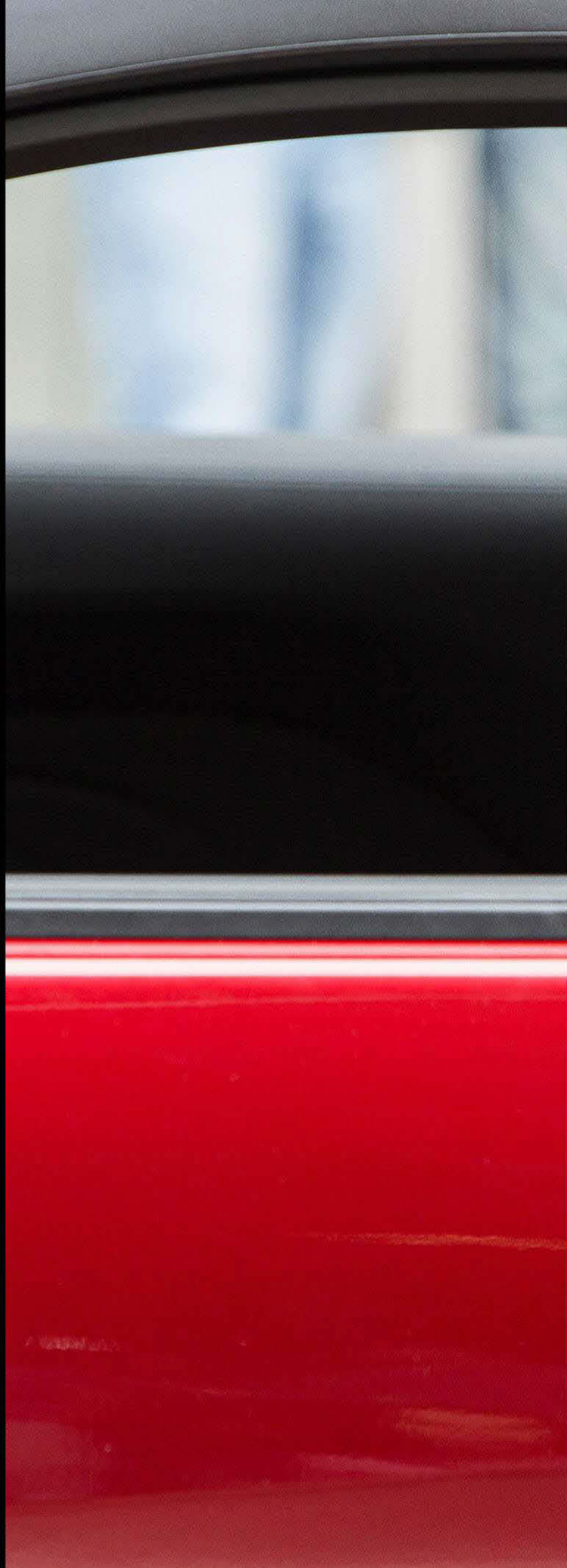


Image: Frank Masi



Image: Frank Masi



Jeff Goldstein, executive vp distribution at Warner Bros., pointed out that "this was a midrange-budgeted movie, and the strong result reflected that. The severely inclement weather in the Midwest and the South played havoc at the box office." Smith, for his part, **is philosophical about the commercial side of Hollywood**, recently saying to the Associated Press that "I can't allow the box office success, or lack thereof, to determine my self-image."

That 88 per cent of the R-rated Focus's watchers were over 25 might not give Smith much reassurance of his appeal to the younger generation of moviegoers. However, Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box office data firm Rentrak, perhaps made the best final analysis with his declaration that the film "still goes down on his balance sheet as a number one debut."

HOW FOCUS PLAYED WITH THE REVIEWERS

The movie naturally centers around Smith's character, an experienced con-man called Nicky Spurgeon, who meets seasoned grifter Jess Barrett - played by Robbie - in a nightclub. She pretends that they have been caught by her jealous husband in an attempt to seduce and con him - a deception that Nicky sees through. But what do the critics make of this and the rest of the movie? **In short, they both love and hate it**.

One such example of a very mixed review was that of ABC's David Blaustein, who described the movie as "overall, entertaining

and surprisingly unpredictable. Though when I say unpredictable, what I mean is some of the twists are imaginative. And when I say imaginative, I mean impossible. Even so, **Focus provides some fun moments, though that lack of empathy for the main players ultimately makes it a less-than-satisfying experience**."

NOLA.com writer Mike Scott, meanwhile, said that the movie "suffers ever so slightly from an episodic rhythm that puts more emphasis on the main characters' relationship than an overarching plot" - while admitting that "**the pieces click together nicely in what ends up being an overall enjoyable package**."

But **Mick LaSalle of SF Gate had little good to say about the movie's big star**. In a review entitled Will Smith just stole $12 from your pocket, he pronounced Smith "not a strong leading man", bemoaning that the actor's "idea of playing romance is to act cool, and his idea of playing cool is to act withdrawn and serious. That means the eclipse of the thing that made him a movie star in the first place, his personality."

Variety's Chief International Film Critic, Peter Debruge, was rather gentler on Smith, suggesting that "this suave if quick-to-dissipate divertissement **shrewdly recasts the star in the George Clooney mold - a good look for the next stage of Smith's career**."

THE FILM IS A TECHNICAL TRIUMPH

Whatever one may make of the acting performances of Smith and Robbie or for that



Image: Frank Masi



Image: Frank Masi





IMAGE: FRANK MASI

matter, the script, there's little denying how visually impressive it is, with director Requa being under no illusions as to the degree of deception that was ironically required to pull off the con man flick. "Any movie is a series of lies," he has observed, adding: "But you have to make sure the lies work so you don't alienate the audience."

All of this was partly made possible by the use of Apollo Robins as a consultant, the self-described gentleman thief lending his expertise in the conception and choreography of original sleight-of-hand maneuvers. However, it was also about ensuring appropriate editing, which is where the Final Cut Pro X program for the Mac came in - **Requa raving about how it "allowed me to be involved with, and in control of, every aspect of making our film."**

Indeed, the major studio feature ended up being entirely cut in Final Cut Pro X, achieving even better than expected results. The film was not only delivered in a timely fashion, but also under budget. As Requa admitted, "We got exactly the film we set out to make."

FOCUS - JUST ABOUT WORTH A WATCH

Granted, verdicts on Focus seem pretty mixed - but very few reviewers couldn't think of at least something substantially positive to say about Will Smith's latest movie. Forbes critic Scott Mendelson, **in an especially positive review of what he called a "surprisingly terrific little crime caper"**, said that it was

"unlike anything else Will Smith, the once and perhaps-future biggest movie star on Earth, has ever made since actually becoming a movie star."

He might be right about that - and whatever you make of Focus as a piece of entertainment, there's no doubting that Smith has given us no shortage of great movies already. It's just fascinating in its own right to watch his recovery from the much-slated After Earth, and the success - however muted - of this latest movie does admittedly leave us wondering what he'll do next.

Could the glory days soon be back for one of Hollywood's undoubted leading men of the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s? That particular verdict will have to wait for another day, but we're enjoying pondering the question. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan



TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL®

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FRANCO, GERE MOVIES AMONG ENTRIES AT TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

The 14th-annual Tribeca Film Festival will feature documentaries on Cuban muscle cars, New Yorker cartoonists and police stun guns.

The downtown New York festival announced half its slate Tuesday, previewing the films that will play in competition.

The festival will feature documentaries across a wide spectrum of subjects, including “Indian Point,” on the New York nuclear facility; “Havana Motor Club,” on muscle cars in Cuba; “Tom Swift and his Electric Rifle,” on police use of stun guns; and “Very Semi-Serious,” about New Yorker cartoons.


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Among the dramatic entries are "The Adderall Diaries," an adaption of Stephen Elliott's memoir starring James Franco; "Franny," a drama about an eccentric older man (Richard Gere) drawn to the daughter (Dakota Fanning) of a dead friend; and "Meadowland," a relationship drama with Olivia Wilde and Luke Wilson.

But documentaries have become known as Tribeca's strongest offerings and are increasingly occupying some of the festival's top showcase slots. This year's festival, which runs April 15-26, will open with the "Saturday Night Live" documentary "Live From New York!"

Other documentaries coming to Tribeca this year focus on the Japanese drink sake ("The Birth of Sake"), romance among the autistic ("Autism in Love") and the most-gored bullfighter in history ("Gored"). Albert Maysles will also present "In Transit," a documentary he co-directed about the longest train route in America.



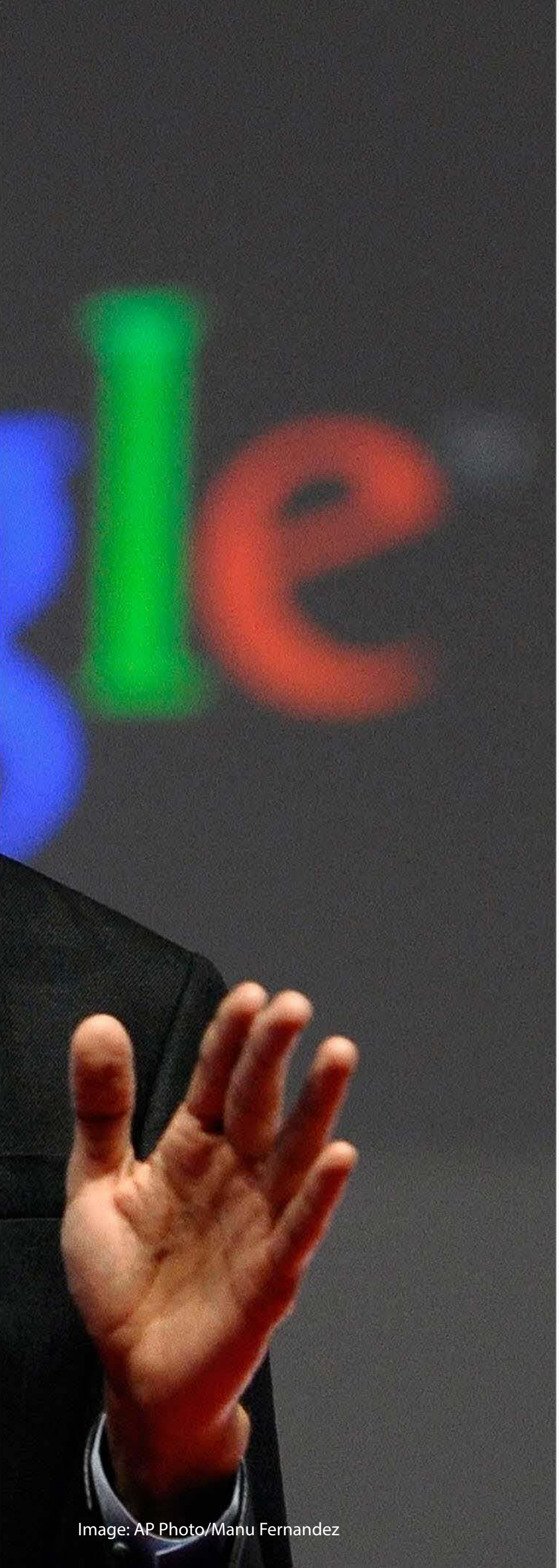


Image: AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

GOOGLE TO OFFER OWN CELLULAR NETWORK PLAN

Google will soon be offering cellular network plans in a bid to bridge the gap between the realms of Internet services and mobile device software it dominates.

Vice President Sundar Pichai says Google, the leading Internet search engine and mobile software provider, is working with unnamed network operators on developing a cellular plan.

“You will see us announce it in the coming months,” he said at the Mobile World Congress wireless show in Barcelona. “I think we are at a stage where it is important to think about hardware, software and connectability together.

“We want to be able to experiment along those lines.”

Pichai called Google’s plan to offer cellular services “a project” and insisted that the Internet company isn’t a threat to traditional telephone and Internet service providers.

Pichai compared Google’s latest move to its decision to launch its own line of Nexus smartphones, which he said Google uses not to

compete with other smartphone makers, rather to introduce innovations in the greater world of mobile hardware.

"We don't intend to be a network operator at scale," he said. "Our goal here is to drive a set of innovations which we think the ecosystem should evolve and hopefully will get traction. Again, we will do it on a small enough scale so that, just like Nexus devices, people see what we are doing and hopefully carrier partners think our ideas are good."

Pichai offered finding a way to provide a "seamless" Internet connection when a device moves from Wi-Fi to cellular coverage as one example of goals Google would like to target.

Pichai said that Google is also working on "Android Pay," a mobile payment system similar to "Apple Pay," that will work across all Android-powered devices.





SHAWN ASHMORE ON JOB SECURITY UNCERTAINTY ON 'THE FOLLOWING'



The cast of Fox's TV series "The Following," knows that it's not the kind of gig that provides job security.

The thriller about FBI agents tracking serial killers has a high body count.

Actor Shawn Ashmore is one of the lucky ones. His character, Mike Weston, is still around from the beginning of the series.

"We looked at the group cast photo from season one and there's not that many people left, honestly," said the actor in a recent phone interview. "Everybody is pretty much dead. It's just the kind of show that we make and we knew that from the get go."

Season three of "The Following" returns Monday at 9 p.m. EDT with an eight-month time jump.





James Purefoy's psychotic murdering cult leader, Joe Carroll, is now on death row while Kevin Bacon's Ryan Hardy, who spent years obsessed with catching Carroll, is moving forward with his life and actually happy.

Weston, however, is obsessed with revenge (against the man who killed his father in season two).

Ashmore says at the start of the series, Weston was "like a shiny penny" and his evolution since "is so interesting for me as an actor."

"From a storytelling perspective, it shows us what Ryan went through before we meet him at the start of the show. With Mike Weston we actually see the process that Ryan went through. These characters are mirroring each other and in season three asking the question, `Will Mike follow Ryan' (and become consumed by revenge). You're seeing two different men experience the same things and see how they react."

There are changes behind the scenes as well. "The Following" has three new showrunners, Brett Mahoney, Alexi Hawley and Marcos Siega. Ashmore says it's been "a seamless" transition because Mahoney and Hawley were writers on season two while Siega has been with the show as an executive producer and director.

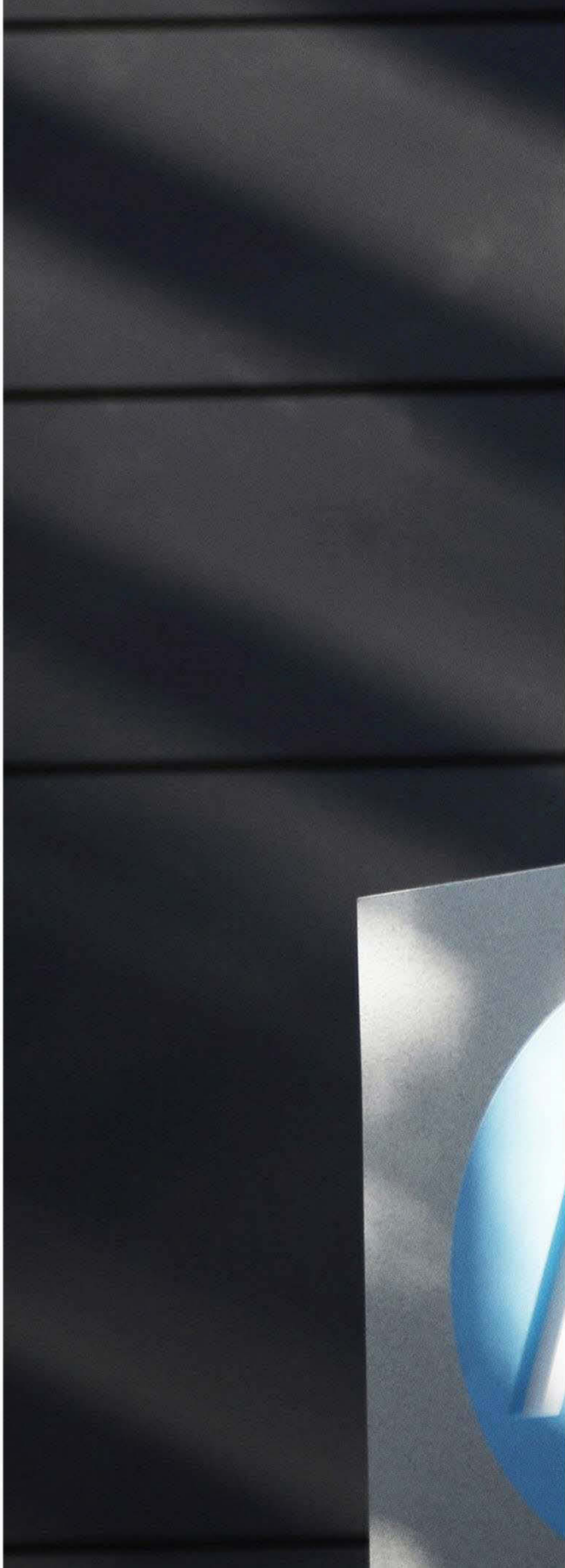
He says the change is fitting because "it's definitely a different show this season."

"You get a fresh set of eyes bringing different aspects in terms of storytelling. Season two we knew who we were chasing, whereas season three it's more of a mystery and a reset."

Online:

http://www.fox.com/the-following/

HP'S BIG DEAL: TECH GIANT BUYS ARUBA NETWORKS FOR $2.7B



Hewlett-Packard is buying wireless networking company Aruba Networks for about $2.7 billion, in what amounts to HP's first major acquisition since its disastrous purchase of a British software company in 2011.

Aruba, based in Sunnyvale, California, makes Wi-Fi networking systems for shopping malls, corporate campuses, hotels and universities. Its business has grown as more people are using mobile devices at work, school and elsewhere. Aruba may help HP capitalize on that trend, which has cut into sales of traditional HP products such as desktop computers.

The deal also could help HP compete with tech rivals such as Cisco Systems and gain new access to Asian markets, particularly in China. Cisco currently sells about half of all commercial wireless networking gear worldwide, according to UBS analyst Amitabh Passi. He estimates HP and Aruba combined will account for 20 percent of global sales for such systems.

HP is seeking to expand its tech portfolio for business customers at a time when it is preparing to split into two companies - one focused on



selling computer systems and software to businesses, and the other selling personal computers and printers. That's part of HP CEO Meg Whitman's plan for confronting a recent decline in sales.

Buying Aruba gives HP "a faster growing, higher margin business that fills a portfolio need without `betting the ranch'," Bernstein analyst Toni Sacconaghi wrote in a note Monday.

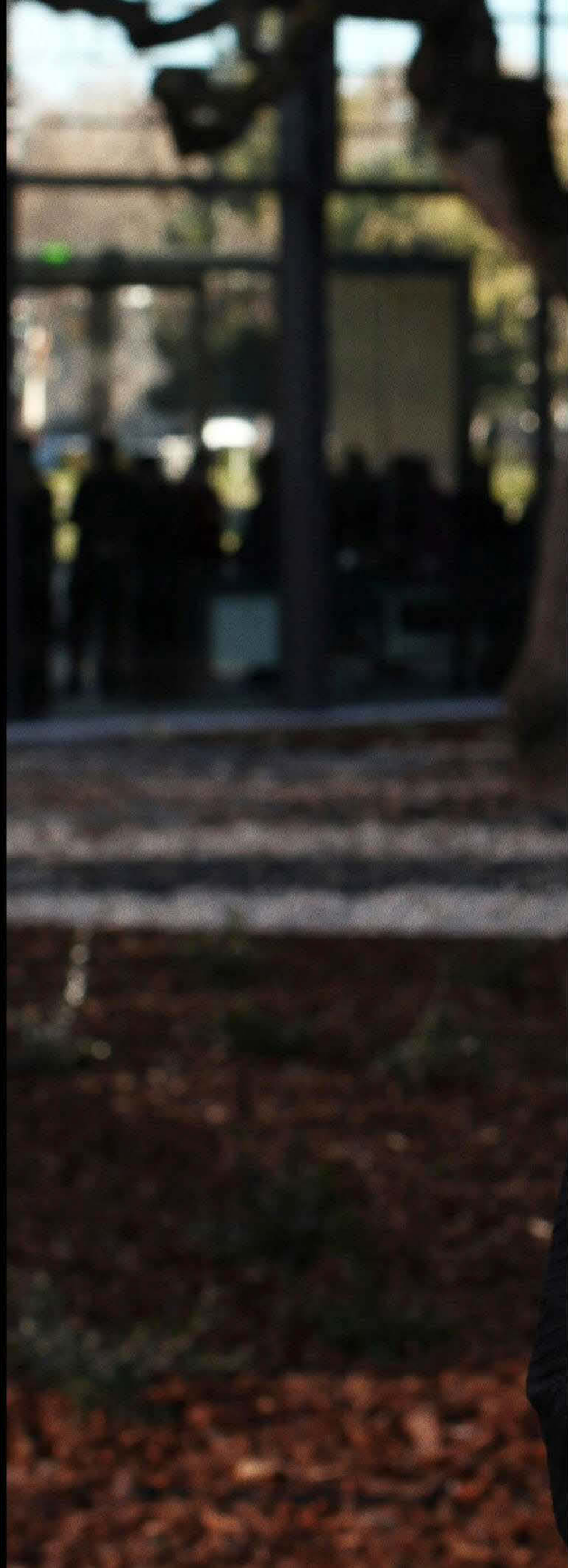
Palo Alto, California-based HP is one of the industry's giants, with $111 billion in sales last year, but it has struggled to adapt to recent tech trends and shifting customer preferences. Whitman has focused on cutting costs and reorganizing since she took the CEO job in 2011. She recently signaled she was ready to resume making strategic acquisitions, after buying a pair of small software companies last year.

HP made a number of multi-billion-dollar acquisitions under two CEOs who preceded Whitman, and some of those deals proved costly. HP paid about $11 billion for British software maker Autonomy in 2011. A year later, it was forced to write off $8.8 billion of that purchase as a loss, while blaming accounting irregularities that it said had inflated the value of Autonomy's business.

With the Aruba deal, HP is paying $24.67 in cash for each Aruba share. That is slightly below Aruba's closing price of $24.81 on Friday, but marks a 37 percent premium to the roughly $18 that Aruba shares were trading for before talks with HP were reported last week.

Boards of both companies have approved the deal, which they said would be worth about $3 billion after factoring in cash and debt on Aruba's balance sheet. Aruba had $729 million in sales last year.

Last Monday, Aruba Networks Inc. shares fell 40 cents, or 1.6 percent, to $24.41, Hewlett-Packard Co. shares slipped 19 cents to $34.65.






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JULIANNE AND DEREK HOUGH TO HIP THE ROAD AGAIN THIS SUMMER

Sibling performers Derek and Julianne Hough have a busy summer ahead.

They're hitting the road for the second year in a row for their "Move Live on Tour," where they dance and sing before a live audience.

This time, they're upping the ante with added tour dates, bigger venues, all new choreography and bigger production values.


BUILD
BUILD



Fan interaction is also an important element, both on stage and off. They participate in meet-and-greets before performances and often dance with audience members during the show.

“We want everybody to be up on their feet, moving in their seat, having a good time and to leave feeling inspired,” said Julianne in a phone interview.

She says they haven’t started rehearsing for “Move Live” yet because of their busy schedules. She’s returning to judge on “Dancing with the Stars” and Derek will once again compete on the show. That means he’ll juggle “Dancing” in Los Angeles with the “New York Spring Spectacular” at Radio City Music Hall.

“Trust me, nobody was more surprised than I was,” said Julianne of that revelation. “I was like, `Wait. What? You’re going to be flying back-and-forth and we’re trying to create a tour? Are you nuts?’”

Tickets for “Move Live on Tour” go on sale Friday.

Online: **http://www.moveliveontour.com**

iTunes

Review



Movies & TV Shows

Rotten **Tomatoes**

CERTIFIED FRESH 28%



Serena

This Susanne Bier directed period drama stars Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper as newlyweds running a timber business in 1930s North Carolina. George Pemberton (Cooper) struggles to keep his timber empire afloat, his life becoming even more complicated when his wife, Serena (Lawrence) learns that she cannot bear children.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Serena is based on Ron Rash's 2008 novel of the same name.

2. The film was originally to be directed by Darren Aronofsky, with Angelina Jolie as the title character.

3. Lawrence and Cooper got along so well on Silver Linings Playbook that they decided to join forces again on Serena.

4. Filming took place at Barrandov Studios in the Czech Republic from March to May 2012.

5. The movie premiered at the BFI London Film Festival on October 13, 2014.

iTunes Preview

by Susanne Bier
Genre: Drama
Released: 2015
Price: $9.99 (Rent HD)

★★★★★
106 Ratings

Trailer

See more in iTunes

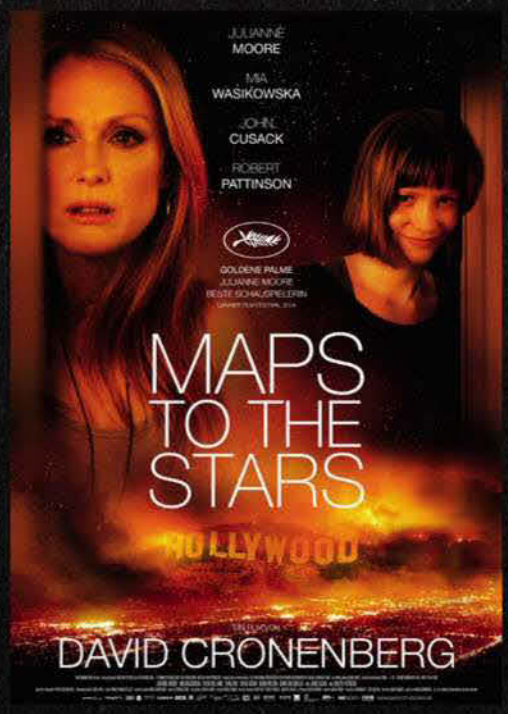


Interview with the Cast and Crew



Maps to the Stars

David Cronenberg directs this unforgettable satirical drama, which focuses on the unraveling life and career of Hollywood actress Havana Segrand (Julianne Moore). John Cusack plays her therapist, while a mysterious young woman called Agatha (Mia Wasikowska) befriends a limo driver (Robert Pattinson) and irrevocably ties all of their lives together.



FIVE FACTS:

1. Olivia Williams, Sarah Gadon and Evan Bird also star.

2. The screenplay was written by Bruce Wagner.

3. Initial plans for making the film with Cronenberg fell through, **leading Wagner to write a novel, entitled Dead Stars, based on the Maps to the Stars script**.

4. The movie is the second consecutive collaboration between Cronenberg and Pattinson, after Cosmopolis.

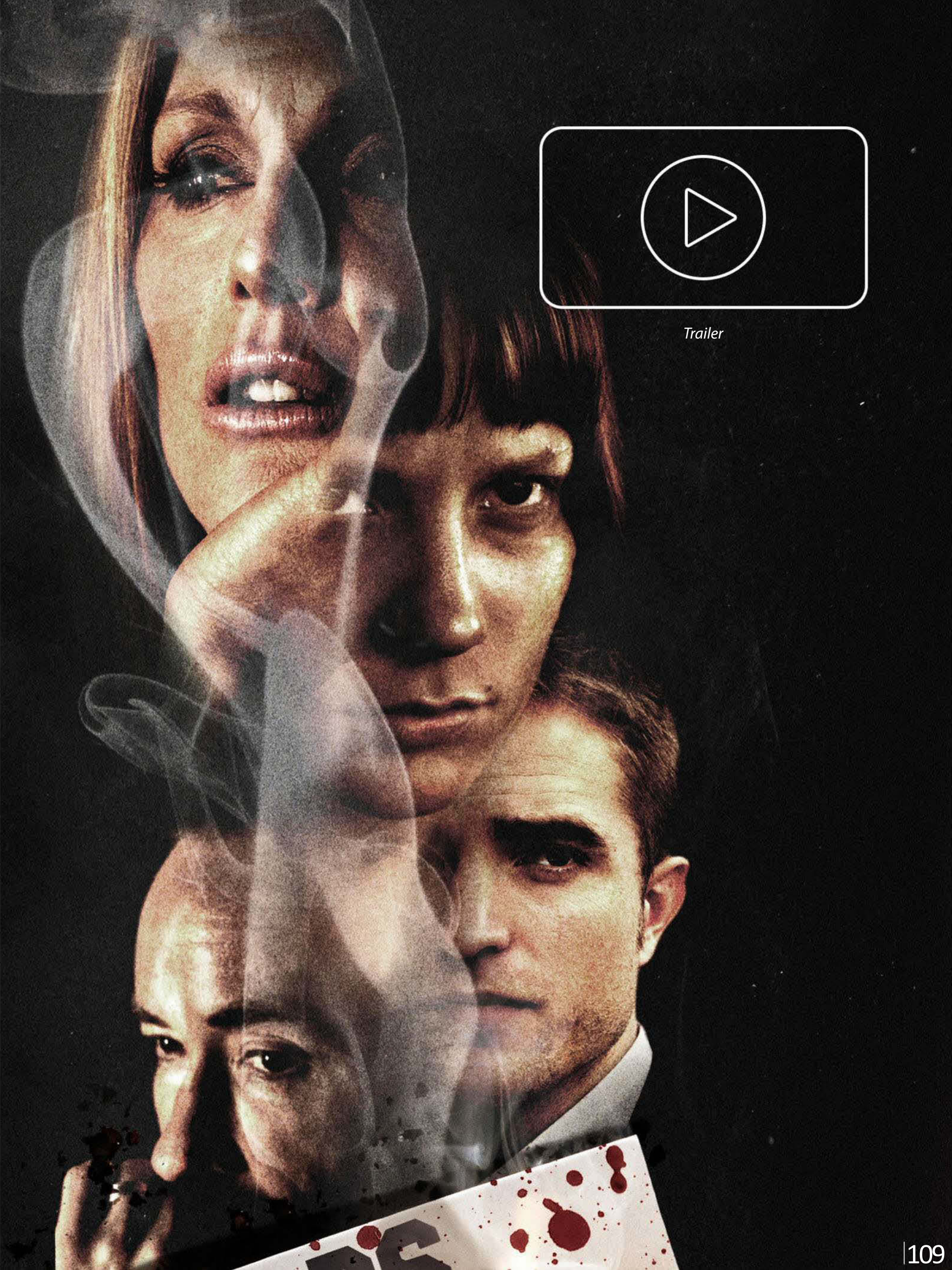
5. It is **the first Cronenberg film to be shot in the United States**.

iTunes **Preview**

by David Cronenberg
Genre: Thriller
Released: 2015
Price: $14.99

★★★★★
53 Ratings

Rotten **Tomatoes**
CERTIFIED FRESH 64%



Trailer

"A BRILLIANT NIGHTMARE"

THE GUARDIAN





Interview with the Cast and Crew

iTunes

Review



I Don't Fuck With You

Music



iTunes Preview

Genre: Hip-Hop/Rap
Released: Feb 24, 2015
15 Songs
Price: $13.99

★★★★½
2027 Ratings

Dark Sky Paradise (Deluxe)

Big Sean

It's a noticeably moodier Big Sean who greets us from the outset of this, his third studio album, which sees the rapper joined by such guest talents as Kanye West, Chris Brown, Drake, Ty Dollar Sign and John Legend. West was also largely responsible for the album's production, alongside the likes of DJ Mustard, Vinylz and Mike WiLL Made-It.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Big Sean is the stage name of Sean Michael Leonard Anderson.

2. He was born in Santa Monica, California on March 25, 1988.

3. His debut album was Finally Famous in 2011.

4. Lead single "I Don't Fuck With You" topped the US Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, Hot Rap Songs and Rhythmic charts.

5. According to Samantha O'Connor of Exclaim!, "Big Sean **has reached a personal high by finding his Dark Sky Paradise**, and it's his honesty that takes listeners there with him."

See more in iTunes





Interview with Big Sean

Skrillex and Diplo Present Jack Ü

Skrillex & Diplo

Skrillex and Diplo release their first album as a duo under the Jack Ü banner, complete with a lead single - "Take Ü There" - that features Canadian musician Kiesza. Other guests on the dance and house infused album include Justin Bieber, Missy Elliott, AlunaGeorge and 2 Chainz.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Jack Ü formed in 2013, and consists of Mad Decent founder Diplo and OWSLA founder Skrillex.

2. The duo's debut performance as Jack Ü was at the Mad Decent Block Party in San Diego on September 15 of that year.

3. Diplo has said that Skrillex "was one of the first producers I met when I moved to LA… we just [have] always been really close musically with our ideas."

4. Kiesza was asked to contribute vocals to "Take Ü There" **after the duo heard her vocals at a show where they were due to perform in Ibiza, Spain**.

5. They recorded her in their hotel room and finished the song in one night.





iTunes **Preview**

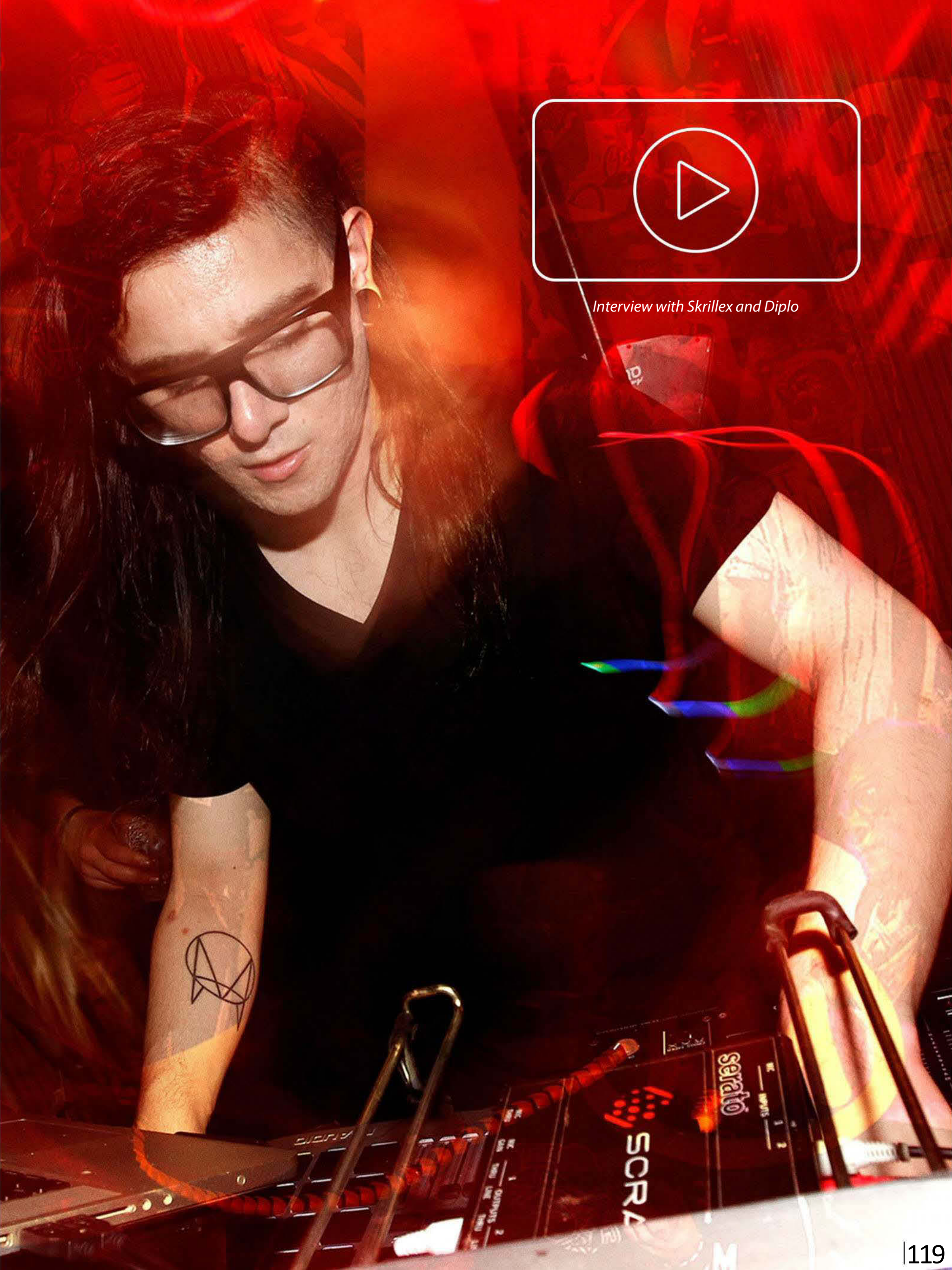
Skrillex

Diplo

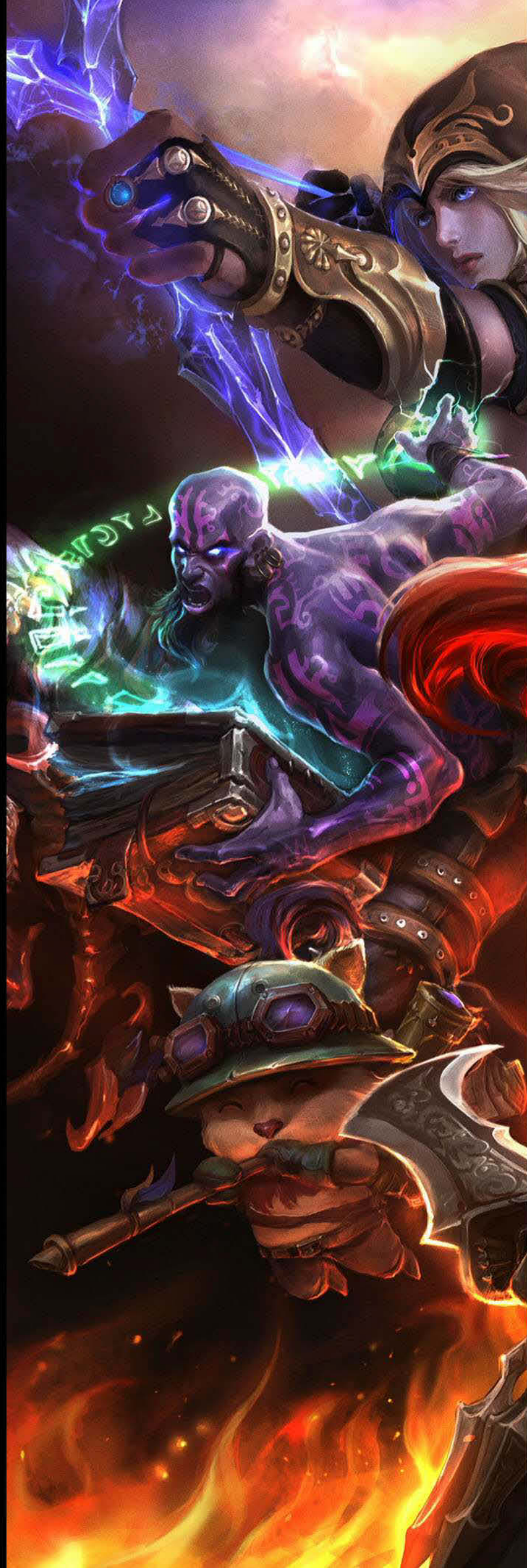
Genre: Dance
Released: Feb 24, 2015
10 Songs
Price: $8.99

★★★★★
700 Ratings

Take Ü There


Interview with Skrillex and Diplo
serato

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE OFFERS CREATORS A SPORTING CHANCE



With tens of millions of gamers now regularly spectating video games online and in real-world arenas, game developers looking to create the next “StarCraft” or “League of Legends” might learn a few lessons at this year’s Game Developers Conference.

For the first time, the annual gathering of game creators that’s usually centered on polygons and artificial intelligence, was hosting a special summit Tuesday dedicated to competitive gaming - or esports (e-sports), as it’s known. Influential esports figures were scheduled to give talks with such titles as “Legal Issues in Competitive Gaming” and “Building a Sport: The Design Philosophy of `League of Legends.’”







"We've had a few individual esports talks in the past but nothing stand-alone," said Simon Carless, executive vice president at UBM Tech Game Network, which hosts GDC and other technology conferences. "This is an entire day dedicated to esports that covers an entire breadth of topics, from producing live esports events to including more women in esports."

Over the past 10 years, esports has evolved from a niche genre of gaming to a lucrative spectator sport capable of packing arenas like Los Angeles' Staples Center and Seoul's World Cup Stadium to capacity for championship bouts of "League of Legends," the arena battle game developed by Riot Games that's easy for most folks to play but difficult to master.

Carless said a survey by GDC organizers of more than 200,000 developers found 79 percent believe competitive gaming is a sustainable business model and 12 percent were currently working on an esports-style competitive multiplayer game. The rise of spectating games is already reshaping how many designers are approaching their latest creations from the outset.

"There are a lot of people watching games and not playing them, so that's definitely a consideration for future projects," said Chris Ashton, design director at "Evolve" developer Turtle Rock Studios. "I don't know what that means for the industry. I never thought I would watch someone play through a game, but I have done that on YouTube and enjoyed it."

Despite dedicating a day to esports, most attention at this year's GDC, which runs through Friday at San Francisco's Moscone Center, will likely be focused on virtual reality, as it was last year. VR technology utilizes a head-mounted display in concert with head-tracking capabilities to transport wearers' to virtual worlds. Oculus VR, which Facebook bought for $2 billion last year, is returning to


HAZARD
CAUTION


WATER, MEDS, PETS
SHD
QUARANTI
AREA
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LEARED PERSON
OLATORS WILL BE DETAIN





GDC with several talks about how developers can craft games for its VR platform.

Sony, which unveiled a prototype VR headset at the 2014 conference called Project Morpheus, is expected to provide an update at an off-site, invite-only event Tuesday on its rendition of VR that works in tandem with the PlayStation 4 console. Thus far, both Oculus and Sony have only shown off prototypes at GDC and not revealed a price or release date.

After announcing their own VR headset on Sunday, HTC and Valve are expected to be on hand at GDC to demonstrate the device called Vive, which works with exterior base stations to track users' movements in spaces up to 15 feet by 15 feet. HTC said it plans to release a Vive prototype for developers this spring and a consumer edition sometime later this year.

Online:

http://www.gdconf.com

SINGER JOHN LEGEND TALKS ABOUT JUSTICE AT BAHRAIN CONCERT

Award-winning American singer and songwriter John Legend took to the stage in Bahrain on Monday night, performing to a sold-out crowd of more than 2,000 people despite calls by some activists to cancel the concert due to concerns over human rights abuses in the Gulf Arab nation.

“When you look at me you might see international superstar John Legend, but I’m also the descendant of slaves… but we fought for change,” he told the concert-goers before singing his Oscar-winning song “Glory,” the anthem for the film “Selma,” which is based on the historic 1965 march in Alabama led by Martin Luther King Jr.

While not addressing the turmoil in Bahrain directly, Legend explained he was at the festival “to celebrate art and its power to bring us together and help us see each other’s humanity.”







“I feel like it’s part of my job to express myself freely and passionately about the issues that I care about,” he said, as the crowd cheered in support.

“A just society is not one built on fear or repression or vengeance or exclusion, but one built on love,” added Legend, who has spoken out in support of freedom of expression and civil rights issues in the United States.

Bahrain, a close U.S. ally that hosts Navy’s 5th fleet, has seen nearly daily protests by members of the Shiite majority demanding a greater say in the Sunni-led monarchy. Several thousand protesters have been jailed and dozens killed in the tiny-island nation over the last four years.

The concert was guarded by anti-riot police vehicles outside the entrance to the historic open-air Arad Fort in Bahrain’s capital.

Several Bahraini activists took to Twitter to urge Legend to boycott the 10th annual Spring of Culture festival, organized by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities.

In a statement to The Independent newspaper before the concert, Legend addressed calls for him to back out of the Bahrain show, and said he has “spent quite a bit of time thinking about human rights, civil rights and other issues of justice.” He said that he felt participating in the conversation was the best way to drive progress.

Bahrain’s leading human rights activist, Nabeel Rajab, took a softer stance toward Legend’s visit than others. He told The Associated Press that he is a fan and welcomes Legend to the country, but would also like to introduce him to relatives of political prisoners.

“I am not against any kind of cultural event and I see that the U.S. civil-rights movement is an inspiration to many Bahraini human rights figures”, Rajab said.

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SCIENCE



Image: AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko

THE BIG MELT: ANTARCTICA'S RETREATING ICE MAY RE-SHAPE EARTH





Image: AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko

From the ground in this extreme northern part of Antarctica, spectacularly white and blinding ice seems to extend forever. What can't be seen is the battle raging thousands of feet (hundreds of meters) below to re-shape Earth.

Water is eating away at the Antarctic ice, melting it where it hits the oceans. As the ice sheets slowly thaw, water pours into the sea - 130 billion tons of ice (118 billion metric tons) per year for the past decade, according to NASA satellite calculations. That's the weight of more than 356,000 Empire State Buildings, enough ice melt to fill more than 1.3 million Olympic swimming pools. And the melting is accelerating.

In the worst case scenario, Antarctica's melt could push sea levels up 10 feet (3 meters) worldwide in a century or two, recurving heavily populated coastlines.

Parts of Antarctica are melting so rapidly it has become "ground zero of global climate change without a doubt," said Harvard geophysicist Jerry Mitrovica.

Here on the Antarctic peninsula, where the continent is warming the fastest because the land sticks out in the warmer ocean, 49 billion tons of ice (nearly 45 billion metric tons) are lost each year, according to NASA. The water warms from below, causing the ice to retreat on to land, and then the warmer air takes over. Temperatures rose 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius) in the last half century, much faster than Earth's average, said Ricardo Jana, a glaciologist for the Chilean Antarctic Institute.

As chinstrap penguins waddled behind him,

Peter Convey of the British Antarctic Survey reflected on changes he could see on Robert Island, a small-scale example and perhaps early warning signal of what's happening to the peninsula and rest of the continent as a whole.

"I was last here 10 years ago," Convey said during a rare sunny day on the island, with temperatures just above freezing. "And if you compare what I saw back then to now, the basic difference due to warming is that the permanent patches of snow and ice are smaller. They're still there behind me, but they're smaller than they were."

Robert Island hits all the senses: the stomach-turning smell of penguin poop; soft moss that invites the rare visitor to lie down, as if on a water bed; brown mud, akin to stepping in gooey chocolate. Patches of the moss, which alternates from fluorescent green to rust red, have grown large enough to be football fields. Though 97 percent of the Antarctic Peninsula is still covered with ice, entire valleys are now free of it, ice is thinner elsewhere and glaciers have retreated, Convey said.

Dressed in a big red parka and sky blue hat, plant biologist Angelica Casanova has to take her gloves off to collect samples, leaving her hands bluish purple from the cold. Casanova says she can't help but notice the changes since she began coming to the island in 1995. Increasingly, plants are taking root in the earth and stone deposited by retreating glaciers, she says.

"It's interesting because the vegetation in some way responds positively. It grows more," she said, a few steps from a sleeping Weddell seal.



Image: AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko



"What is regrettable is that all the scientific information that we're seeing says there's been a lot of glacier retreat and that worries us."

Just last month, scientists noticed in satellite images that a giant crack in an ice shelf on the peninsula called Larsen C had grown by about 12 miles (20 kilometers) in 2014. Ominously, the split broke through a type of ice band that usually stops such cracks. If it keeps going, it could cause the breaking off of a giant iceberg somewhere between the size of Rhode Island and Delaware, about 1,700 to 2,500 square miles (4,600 to 6,400 square kilometers), said British Antarctic Survey scientist Paul Holland. And there's a small chance it could cause the entire Scotland-sized Larsen C ice shelf to collapse like its sister shelf, Larsen B, did in a dramatic way in 2002.

A few years back, scientists figured Antarctica as a whole was in balance, neither gaining nor losing ice. Experts worried more about Greenland; it was easier to get to and more noticeable, but once they got a better look at the bottom of the world, the focus of their fears shifted. Now scientists in two different studies use the words "irreversible" and "unstoppable" to talk about the melting in West Antarctica. Ice is gaining in East Antarctica, where the air and water are cooler, but not nearly as much as it is melting to the west.

"Before Antarctica was much of a wild card," said University of Washington ice scientist Ian Joughin. "Now I would say it's less of a wild card and more scary than we thought before."

Over at NASA, ice scientist Eric Rignot said the melting "is going way faster than anyone had thought. It's kind of a red flag."

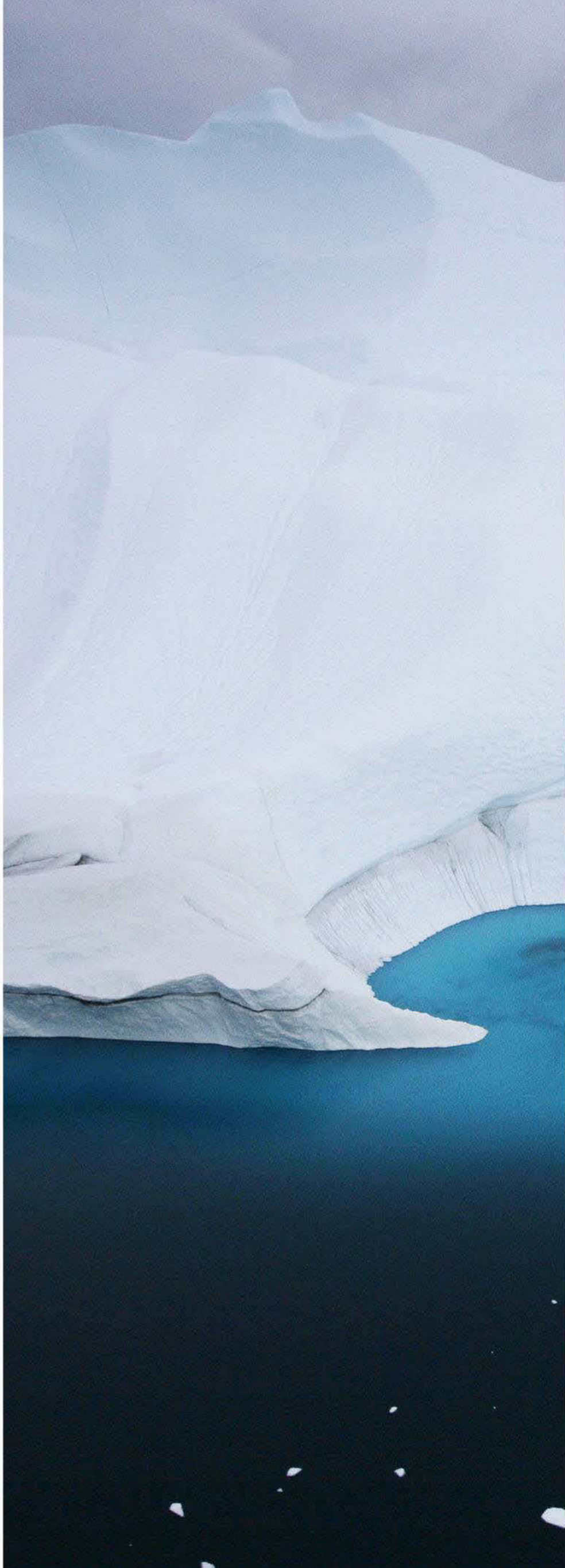
What's happening is simple physics. Warm water eats away at the ice from underneath. Then more ice is exposed to the water, and it too melts. Finally, the ice above the water collapses into the water and melts.

Climate change has shifted the wind pattern around the continent, pushing warmer water farther north against and below the western ice sheet and the peninsula. The warm, more northerly water replaces the cooler water that had been there. It's only a couple degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the water that used to be there, but that makes a huge difference in melting, scientists said.

The world's fate hangs on the question of how fast the ice melts.

At its current rate, the rise of the world's oceans from Antarctica's ice melt would be barely noticeable, about one-third of a millimeter a year. The oceans are that vast.

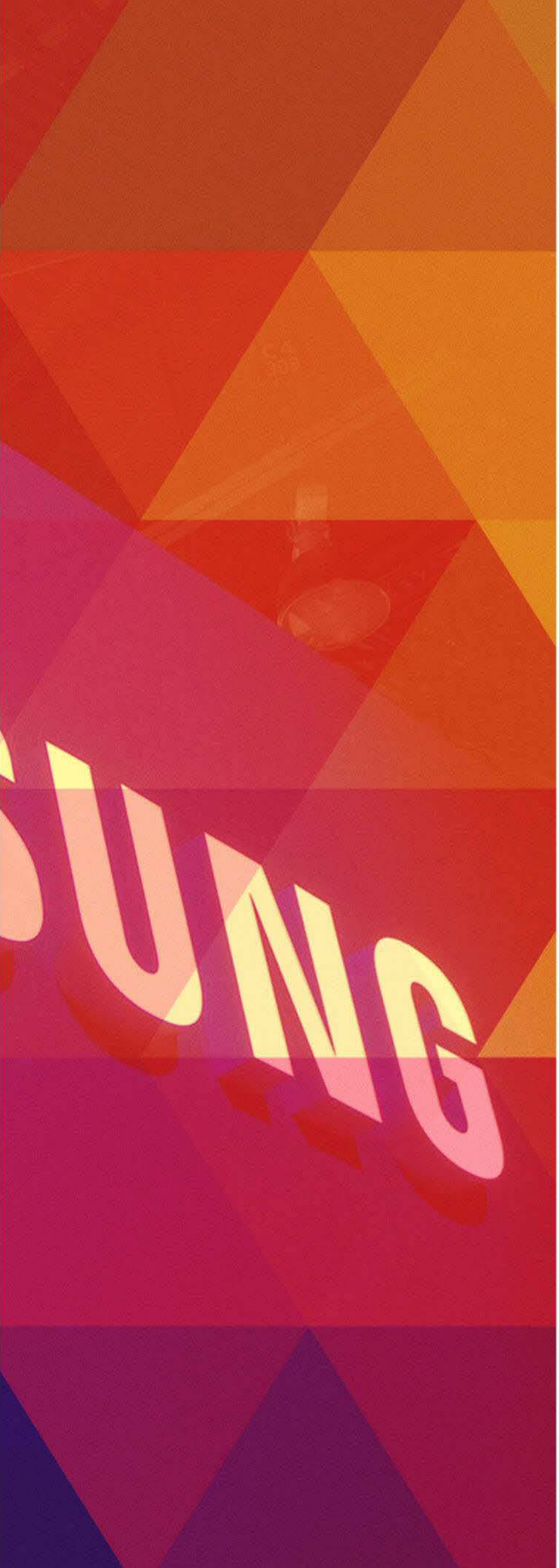
But if all the West Antarctic ice sheet that's connected to water melts unstoppably, as several experts predict, there will not be time to prepare. Scientists estimate it will take anywhere from 200 to 1,000 years to melt enough ice to raise seas by 10 feet, maybe only 100 years in a worst case scenario. If that plays out, developed coastal cities such as New York and Guangzhou could face up to $1 trillion a year in flood damage within a few decades and countless other population centers will be vulnerable.







"Changing the climate of the Earth or thinning glaciers is fine as long as you don't do it too fast. And right now we are doing it as fast as we can. It's not good," said Rignot, of NASA. "We have to stop it; or we have to slow it down as best as we can."



Q&A ON SAMSUNG'S NEW MOBILE PAY: HERE'S WHAT'S WE KNOW

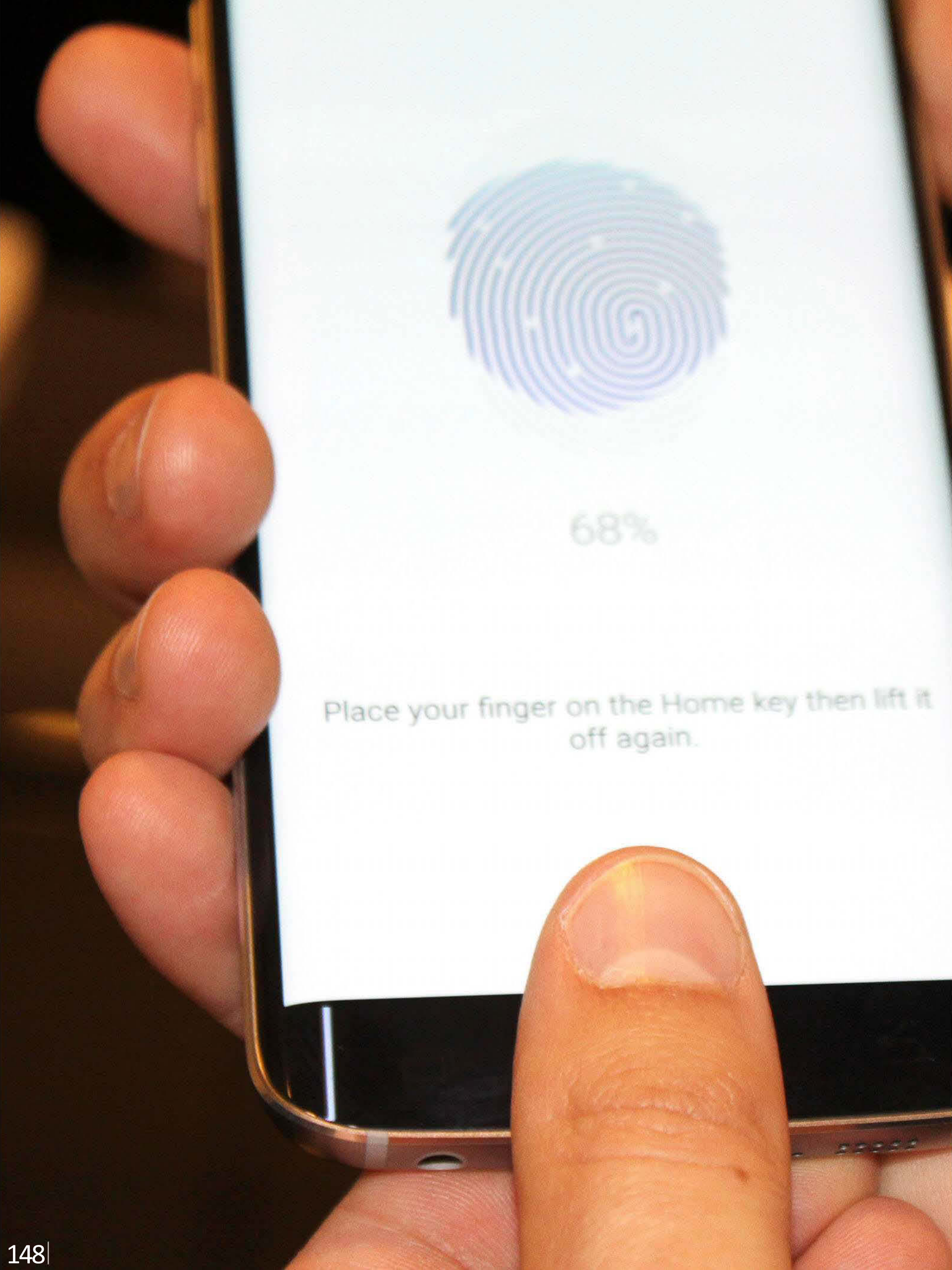
Last fall, Apple launched Apple Pay, bringing mobile-payment technology to the iPhone. Samsung now wants to get that on Android phones - at least the ones it makes.

The Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge phones announced Sunday will come with mobile-pay capabilities. Samsung's payment service won't come until this summer, and will launch only in the U.S. and South Korea at first. Here's what's known about Samsung Pay and how it compares with Apple Pay and Google's own efforts for Android.

Q. How does Samsung Pay work?

As with Apple Pay, customers will simply tap their phone on a retail store's payment machine. Apple and Samsung phones use a wireless technology known as near-field communication, or NFC. The payment machine also needs NFC, something many merchants won't have until this fall.

Samsung is supplementing NFC with a technology from LoopPay, a startup it's buying. LoopPay replicates the magnetic-strip signals on plastic cards, so it works with more merchants. While NFC transactions can be authorized through the phones' fingerprint sensors, LoopPay transactions might still require a physical signature.


68%
Place your finger on the Home key then lift it off again.



Q. If there's LoopPay, why bother with NFC and the equipment that entails?

A. As a retrofit for older, magnetic technology, LoopPay has its limitations. Some parking meters and transit-fare machines require you to insert a card into a slot. You can't just stick a phone with LoopPay into that slot. At some stores, the place for swiping the card is behind the counter - out of the customer's reach.

LoopPay is meant as a transition. Bill Gajda, a senior vice president at Visa, says LoopPay will help get customers more comfortable with mobile payments, as more merchants will accept them. As merchants see customers make such payments, they would be more likely to upgrade equipment to NFC.

Q. How secure is Samsung Pay?

Samsung Pay, like Apple Pay, promises to be more secure than plastic. With both services, the merchant gets a substitute 16-digit card number stored on the device. A verification code is created for each transaction, based in part on unique keys on the phone. Even if hackers get that substitute number, they need the actual phone for the verification code.

That said, LoopPay's stand-alone technology uses the regular card number, and magnetic signals are easy to detect and replicate. Samsung is working with both Visa and MasterCard to make substitute numbers available with LoopPay on the phones to boost security. James Anderson, a senior vice president for mobile at MasterCard, says the bank issuing the card needs to participate. If they don't, some card holders might not be able to make mobile payments, even with the right phone. Samsung says participating banks will include American Express, Bank of America, Citi, JPMorgan Chase, and U.S. Bank.

Q. Will merchants be able to block Samsung Pay as CVS, 7-Eleven and a few others have done with Apple Pay?

A. Yes, but not easily. With NFC transactions, it was a matter of turning off the NFC chip. Samsung Pay has the magnetic backup, so it will be tough to turn that off without rejecting plastic cards, too. Merchants could potentially work with their payment processors to deny ranges of card numbers assigned as substitute account numbers, Gajda says. That's unlikely, but not impossible.

Q. What about Google's own payment service?

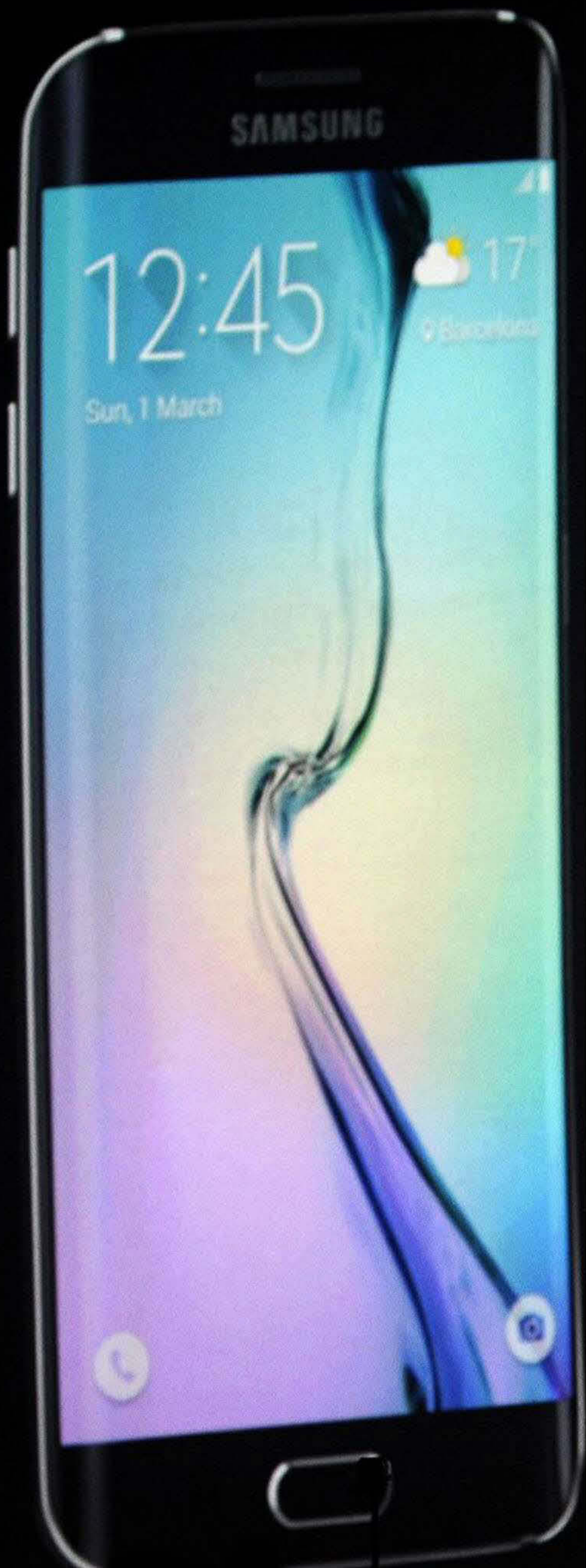
Google recently teamed up with Verizon Wireless, AT&T and T-Mobile to have its Google Wallet payment service built into Android phones sold by those carriers. Google also is buying some technology from Softcard, a payment venture owned by the three wireless carriers. Both Google Wallet and Softcard use NFC.

Unlike Samsung Pay, Google Wallet will work on Android phones sold by other manufacturers. Samsung phones sold by those three carriers will have both services. Customers must pick one to use - so that they won't end up paying for everything twice.

So far, Google Wallet uses regular card numbers, without the added security from substitute numbers used by Apple Pay or planned with Samsung Pay.

Q. Will Samsung Pay work with other phones?

A. Future phones will likely get it, too. Older models likely won't work, though. Although they have NFC, they don't have LoopPay.




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CIAO MILAN, IT'S BONJOUR FOR PARIS FASHION WEEK

Bye, New York! Ciao, Milan! Bonjour, Paris!

The world's largest traveling circus of fashion editors, models, buyers and journalists has descended on the French capital, clutching their metro maps and city guides, to cap the ready-to-wear fashion season.

For fall-winter 2015-16, the dizzying 92 scheduled shows mean the nine-day "week" almost tears at the seams, with events starting early in the day and finishing later than ever at night.

Tuesday - day one - saw collections dominated by rising star Anthony Vaccarello, who has been chosen as the creative designer of Versace's sister line, Versus.

Here's a look at the highlights:



ANTHONY VACCARELLO'S MATCH MADE IN VERSACE HEAVEN

The Italian-Belgian designer is the fashion man of the moment. One of Paris' younger emerging talents, Vaccarello has made a name for himself with provocative styles that are revealing without being vulgar. So the announcement this January that Vaccarello would get together with his spiritual sister Donatella Versace to work on her Versus diffusion line looked like a match made in heaven.

In Tuesday's show, the 32-year-old showed exactly why he's been tapped by the Italian super-house.

The vibe felt very `80s and very Italian, with sharp shoulders, studs and thigh-high stripper boots with lashings of black leather and suede. Splits in the side of an asymmetrical little black dress was adorned with sexy belt fastenings. Stars motifs added a feminine twinkle in the collection that seemed to bridge more than ever the similarities between the Versace and the Vaccarello universes.

PARIS CELEBRATES JEANNE LANVIN

Along with Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli, she towered high for decades as one of the pillars of French fashion. Now iconic designer Jeanne Lanvin, who died in 1946, will be honored in a new exhibition opening this week at the Paris City Fashion museum at the Palais Galliera.

The show will be inaugurated by Paris' Mayor Anne Hidalgo and celebrates Lanvin as being the oldest operating fashion house in France. It's a rich legacy that has spanned the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

"Jeanne Lanvin" will run until August 23.



EACH X OTHER

Each X Other describes itself as a “new androgyne collaborative art and fashion brand, a magnetic point where roads cross and people finally meet.”

At their strong debut show in Paris, brand founders Jenny Mannerheim and Ilan Delouis stuck to this mantra and injected a nice whiff of menswear to a highly cool showing of linear styles. With a funky, contemporary art space backdrop at the Palais de Tokyo and a cryptic Goethe quote on the wall, it’s clear this house is trying to set itself up as a space where art meets fashion.

It worked.

Dark, silken jumpsuits with round collars contrasted with the sharp lapels and square shoulders of a menswear tuxedo. Subtle chevron patterning gave a twist to a cream overcoat. And huge textured knitting in an oversize blue cocoon sweater was an invitation to a cuddle.


Health

YOUNG GIRL'S STORY MAY LEAD IDAHO TO APPROVE MARIJUANA OIL



Ten-year-old Alexis Carey has a rare but intractable form of epilepsy, Dravet Syndrome. The genetic disease causes severe and multiple seizures, which often leave parents guessing if the terror of watching their child seize up will pass or turn fatal.

Her Boise, Idaho, family learned that oil extracted from marijuana had helped other children and wanted to see if it would help Alexis too.

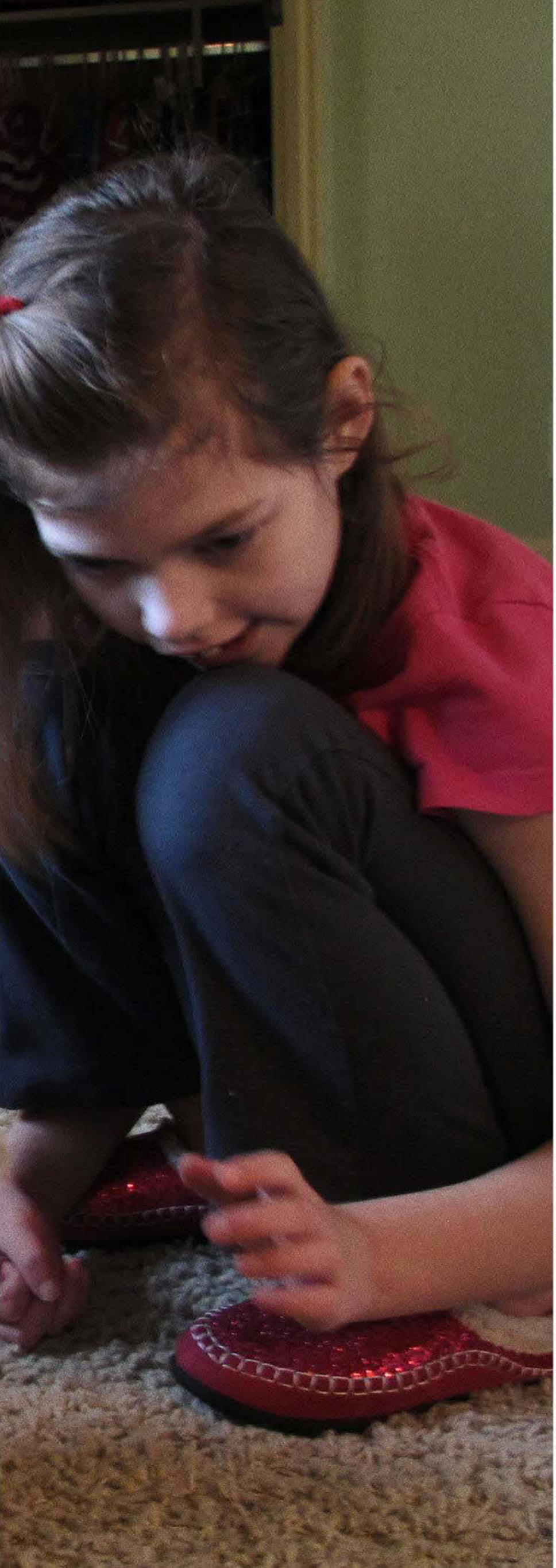
“Parent to parent, when you’re in a small community and 10 people that you know are all having success, that’s no longer anecdotal,” Clare Carey, her mother, said. “That’s hope.”

But Idaho’s stringent marijuana laws do not allow for medicinal use. The family began lobbying lawmakers to decriminalize the oil almost two years ago. Now, they’ve got some legislative backers and an upcoming hearing, as Idaho joins a larger movement to loosen laws to allow the use of marijuana extract oil.

Twelve states have legalized the oil while still banning medical marijuana. Virginia legalized the oil Feb. 26. In Utah, lawmakers have given initial approval to let those with chronic and debilitating diseases consume edible marijuana products, while still banning smoking.

Marijuana extract oil first received attention when a Colorado family fought and won for access for their daughter who also had Dravet Syndrome. It is similar to hemp oil, which is legal in Idaho and can be bought in grocery stores.

With no known cure for Dravet Syndrome, children are often prescribed a cocktail of medications to counter the seizures. However, the heavy drugs often come with side-effects that can permanently damage a child’s developing liver, kidneys and other organs.



Proponents of cannabidiol oil, a non-psychotropic extract of marijuana, argue that it reduces the amount and length of seizures in children.

Over time, Carey hopes that the oil would also reduce the number of medications her daughter relies on.

“Like any parent, you never give up hope that you can get complete seizure control,” she said. “Children die from Dravet by any one of the seizures. Alexis could have a seizure that may not stop, we never really know.”

Alexis began having seizures when she was two months old. But even in 2003, her mom says a lack of awareness of the disease led to many doctors not automatically suspecting it could be a rare, genetic disorder.

It wasn’t until Alexis lost all speech and potty control when she was 2 that doctors determined she had Dravet Syndrome, Carey said.

Since then, Alexis’ parents have put her on a variety of diets and medications to help reduce the seizures but the disease is tricky to manage. Dravet Syndrome often causes a variety of different kinds of seizures but medications typically target one particular type.

Alexis’ seizures usually occur at night, which means one of her parents regularly sleep with her and monitor her sleep patterns. During the day, Alexis requires constant supervision. While most 10-year-olds freely run and jump around, Alexis walks- albeit sometimes unstably and with help going up and down stairs.

Carey says working with Idaho’s Republican-controlled Legislature has been easier than anticipated.

Lawmakers who resisted the idea at first blush have warmed up to the idea, she said.

This year, the bill is endorsed by Republicans Sen. Curt McKenzie and Rep. Tom Leortscher. Both are chairs of the legislature's State Affairs Committees, panels that often get tossed controversial legislation and have a high bar for clearance.

The measure unanimously passed the Senate committee during its introduction hearing, which means it now goes on to a full hearing in front of the committee.

Yet the bill must survive a Statehouse that approved a resolution in 2013 vowing never to legalize marijuana for any purpose.





SONY PLANS TO LAUNCH VIRTUAL-REALITY HEADSET IN 2016





Sony plans on putting its virtual-reality headset on consumers' noggins next year.

The gaming and electronics company announced Tuesday at the Game Developers Conference that its VR system nicknamed Project Morpheus will debut in the first half of 2016.

Sony Corp. originally unveiled a prototype of the headset at last year's gathering of video game developers. The headset works in tandem with Sony's PlayStation 4 console and camera by covering users' vision and simulating virtual worlds on screen.

Sony flaunted an updated version of the VR headset prototype at Tuesday's event. While it largely resembles the prototype introduced last year, the new version redistributes weight toward the back of the user's head and features a screen that can slide back and forth to accommodate eyeglasses.



Image: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

The new prototype also features a larger 5.7-inch OLED screen that displays nearly a 100-degree field of view and is capable of rendering imagery at up to 120 frames per second. There are nine LED lights on the headset's exterior that are to track movement.

No price was announced.

"Our goal with VR is to deliver a sense of presence, making the player feel as though they've stepped inside the world of a game," said Shuhei Yoshida, president of Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios. "The new Project Morpheus prototype brings us closer to that goal, as it improves the visual experience and tracking accuracy, both of which are critical to achieving sense of presence."

The company showed off the new prototype at Tuesday's event with four technical demonstrations, including a game that utilized a pair of PlayStation Move controllers to simulate a shootout inside a lavish building in London and a more passive presentation that featured tiny robots responding to users' movements.

Sony is among several gaming and electronics companies working to bring VR into homes. HTC and Valve announced plans Sunday to release its Vive VR system to consumers later this year, while Oculus VR has yet to reveal when its Oculus Rift headset will be available to consumers.





NBC'S 'PARKS AND RECREATION' SAYS FAREWELL

Viewers said farewell to Amy Poehler and the gang of Pawnee, Indiana, bureaucrats on NBC's "Parks and Recreation," in a finale that made more of a dent online than on television.

The Nielsen company said an estimated 4.15 million people saw the show exit Tuesday after seven seasons on the air. While it was the show's biggest audience in two years, it ranked only No. 58 among all the prime-time broadcast shows last week, reflecting its status as more of a cult than broad-based favorite.

However, the finale generated more tweets than any other program on television, including AMC's popular "The Walking Dead," which had more than triple the viewers, Twitter said.





"Parks and Recreation" added another million viewers on a time-delayed basis within three days of its airing.

CBS' duo of "NCIS" and "The Big Bang Theory" led the ratings last week, as is often the case. But on broadcast TV, the next five most-watched scripted shows were all series that debuted within the past year.

CBS easily won the week in prime-time, averaging 9.2 million viewers. NBC had 6.4 million, ABC had 6.1 million, Fox had 5 million, Univision had 3.1 million, the CW had 1.3 million, ION Television had 1.2 million and Telemundo had 1.1 million.

AMC was the week's most popular cable network, averaging 1.91 million viewers in prime time. USA had 1.85 million, Fox News Channel had 1.83 million, The Disney Channel had 1.68 million and Discovery had 1.65 million.

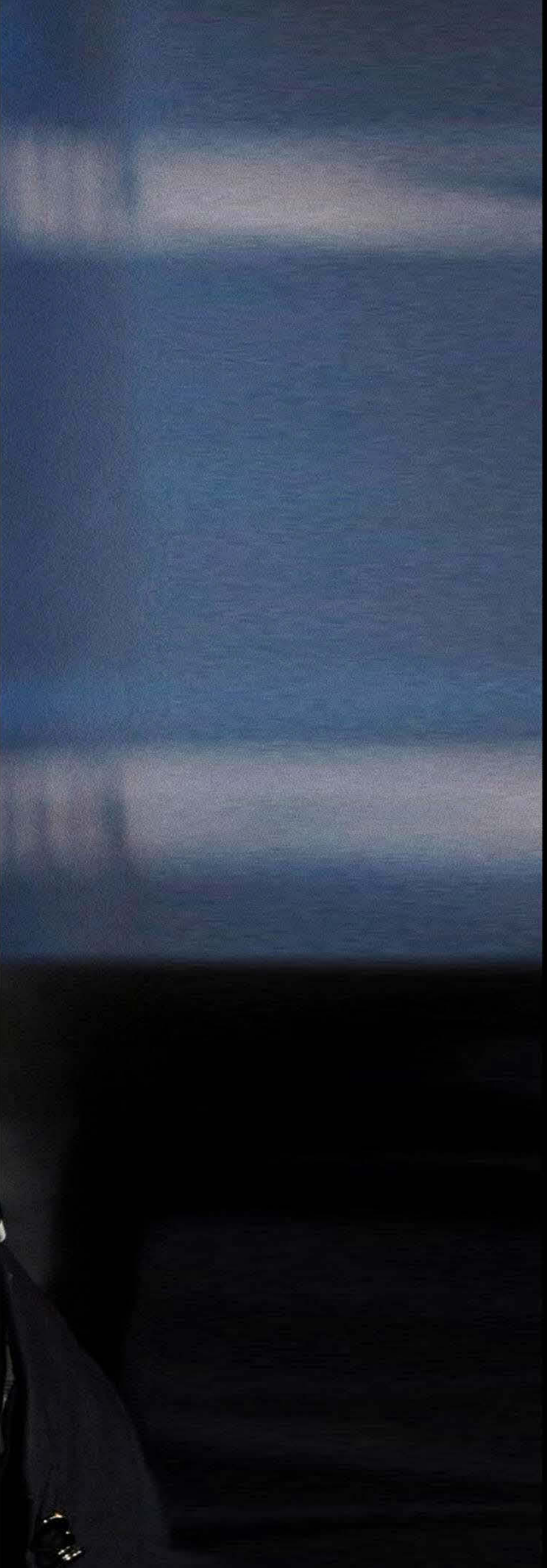
NBC's "Nightly News" continued to maintain its lead with Lester Holt filling in for the suspended Brian Williams, although the gap with second-place ABC is tightening. "Nightly News" averaged 9.7 million viewers last week, ABC's "World News Tonight" had 9.5 million and the "CBS Evening News" had 8 million.

For the week of Feb. 23-March 1, the top 10 shows, their networks and viewerships: "NCIS," CBS, 17.38 million; "The Big Bang Theory," CBS, 16.67 million; "The Walking Dead," AMC, 14.43 million; "The Voice" (Tuesday), NBC, 14.06 million; "The Voice" (Monday), NBC, 13.97 million; "Empire," Fox, 13.9 million; "NCIS: New Orleans," CBS, 13.71 million; "60 Minutes," CBS, 13.55 million; "Madam Secretary," CBS, 11.65 million; "The Odd Couple," CBS, 11.08 million.

Online:

http://www.nielsen.com



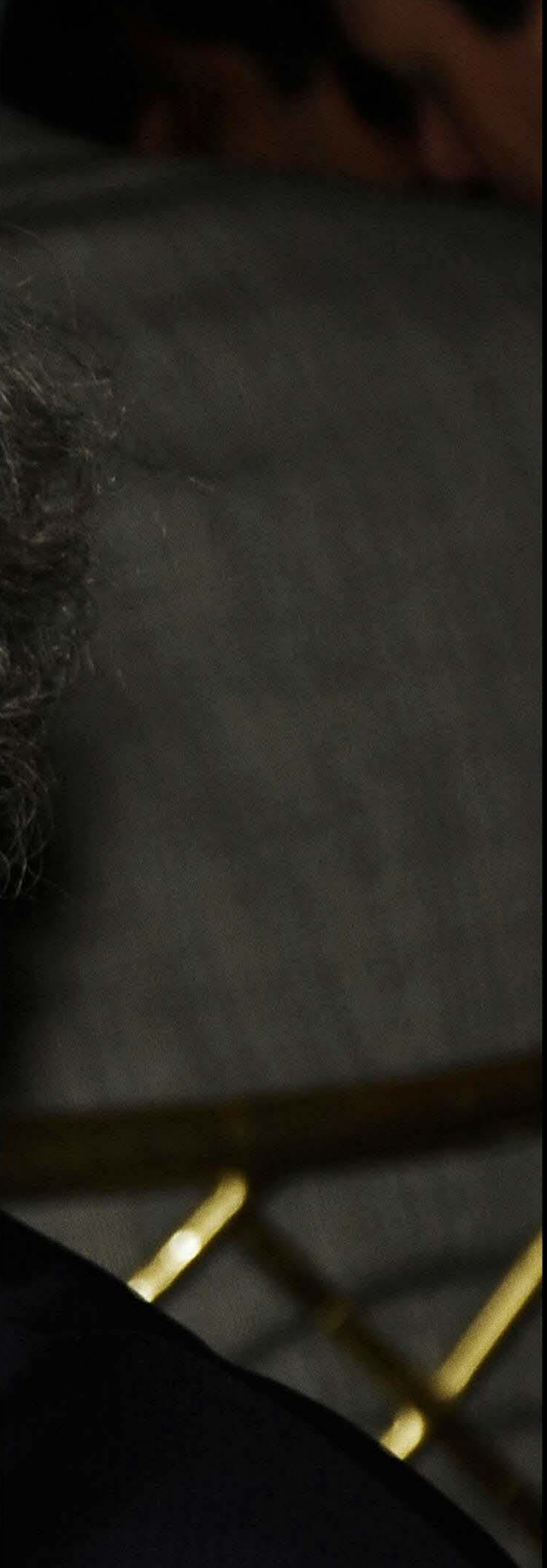


ANDREW LACK IN TALKS TO RETURN TO NBC

NBC Universal is in talks to bring back Andrew Lack to its troubled news operation, which would be the first high-level shake-up following several rough months culminating in the six-month suspension of “Nightly News” anchor Brian Williams for misleading viewers about his experiences covering the Iraq War.

An executive at NBC Universal who spoke on condition of anonymity because it was a personnel matter said that if an agreement was reached, Lack, a veteran executive who ran NBC’s news division from 1993 to 2001, would return in a lead role at the NBC News Group, which includes NBC News, MSNBC and CNBC.





NBC Universal spokesman Mark Kornblau declined to comment on the negotiations, first reported in Variety on Tuesday. A spokesman at the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which Lack currently runs, did not immediately return a call for comment.

It would mark Lack's second time returning to NBC News at a time of trouble. After more than 15 years at CBS News as a top producer, he replaced Michael Gartner as NBC News chief following revelations the network had rigged a pickup truck to catch fire in a crash shown on "Dateline NBC."

After serving as news chief at NBC, he became network president before leaving in 2003 to become chairman of Sony Music Entertainment. He left the music business for Bloomberg Media, spending six years there before becoming chief executive at the Broadcasting Board of Governors, a federal agency, last year.

He would bring extensive news experience in the U.S. market to a leadership team that now lacks it. Pat Fili-Krushel, who now runs the NBC News Group, is a veteran TV executive with a background mostly in entertainment and NBC News President Deborah Turness came to the network from ITV News in Great Britain. Both are expected to remain with NBC Universal, although their future roles are unclear, the executive said.

The biggest issue Lack would immediately face is the future of Williams, currently the target of an internal investigation into other instances where he may have told untrue or exaggerated stories about his news experiences, often in entertainment settings. There are conflicting feelings, even within NBC News, about whether Williams would ever be able to return as the network's top on-air personality. Lester Holt is filling in for Williams and has kept "Nightly News" atop the ratings, although its


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edge over second-place ABC's "World News Tonight" has shrunk.

"Nightly News" and Williams had been the bright spot at NBC News, where the "Today" show hasn't been able to cut into the ratings lead of ABC's "Good Morning America" and saw the embarrassing saga of a new executive overseeing the show being let go after only a couple of months last fall. Turness engineered the replacement of David Gregory as "Meet the Press" host by Chuck Todd last year. NBC angered viewers last fall when medical correspondent Nancy Snyderman violated a self-imposed quarantine for potential Ebola exposure.

CNBC and MSNBC also present challenges, primarily due to declining ratings.

CNBC had some of its worst ratings since the late 1990s last year, and recently announced it had stopped relying on the Nielsen company, the industry standard for measuring viewership. CNBC has long contended Nielsen's failure to measure workplace viewing underestimates its audience, but the network has also been challenged by the business world's increased reliance on the Internet for fast-moving news.

The left-leaning news network MSNBC has also lost viewers, and is said to be re-evaluating the extent to which it emphasizes a political point of view or more straight news.

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